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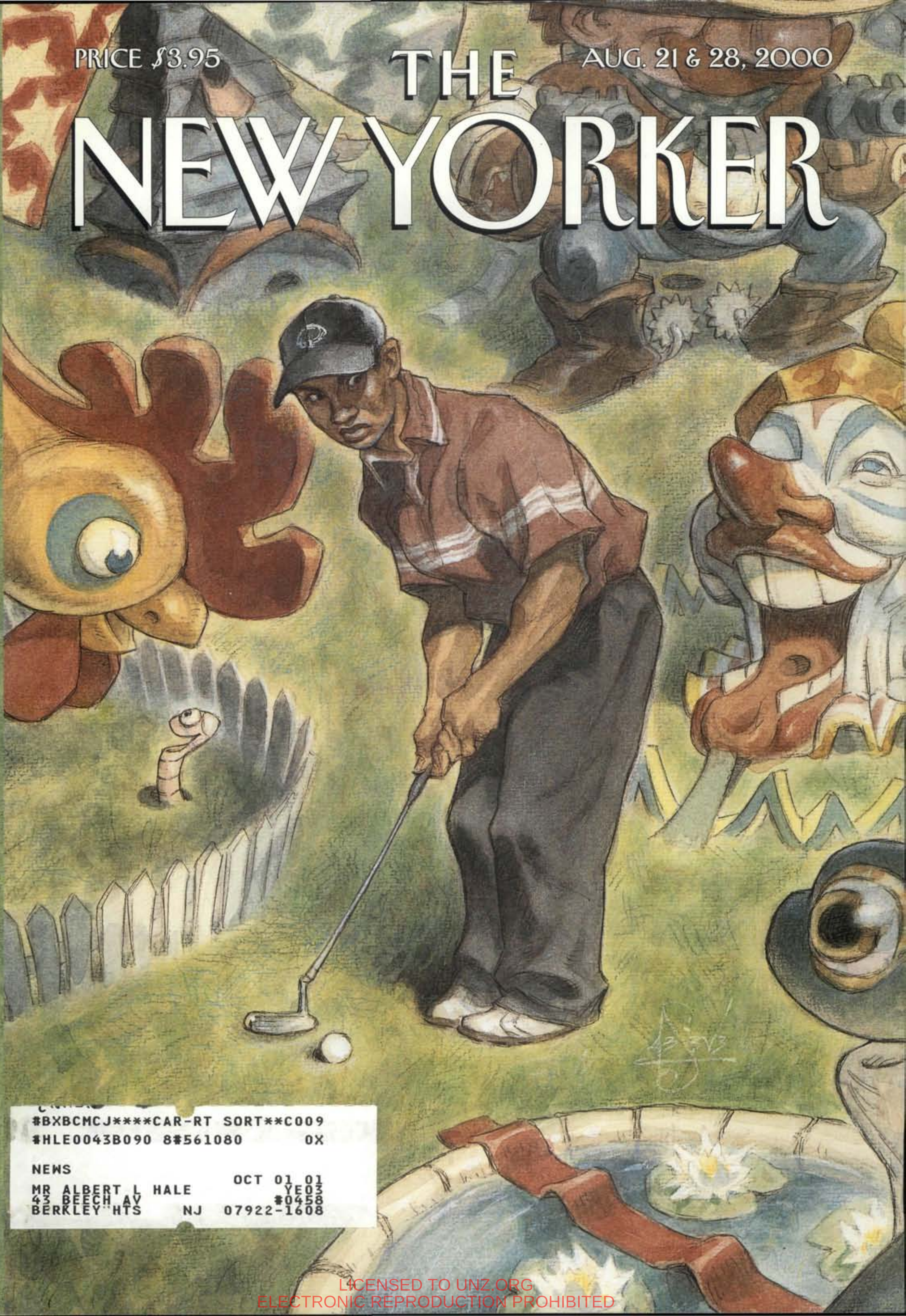

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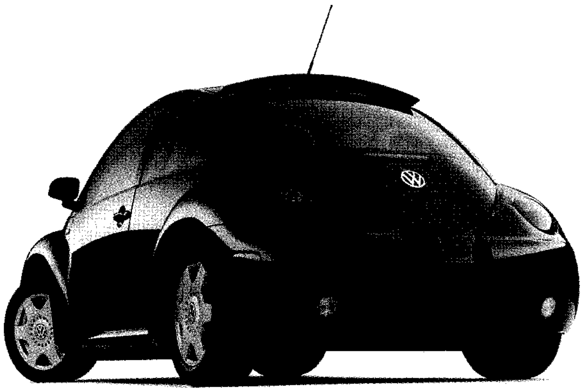

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THE NEW YORKER
THE SPORTS ISSUE

AUGUST 21 & 28, 2000

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TO UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF THE OCEAN,
DR. ROBERT BALLARD USES THE MOST SOPHISTICATED
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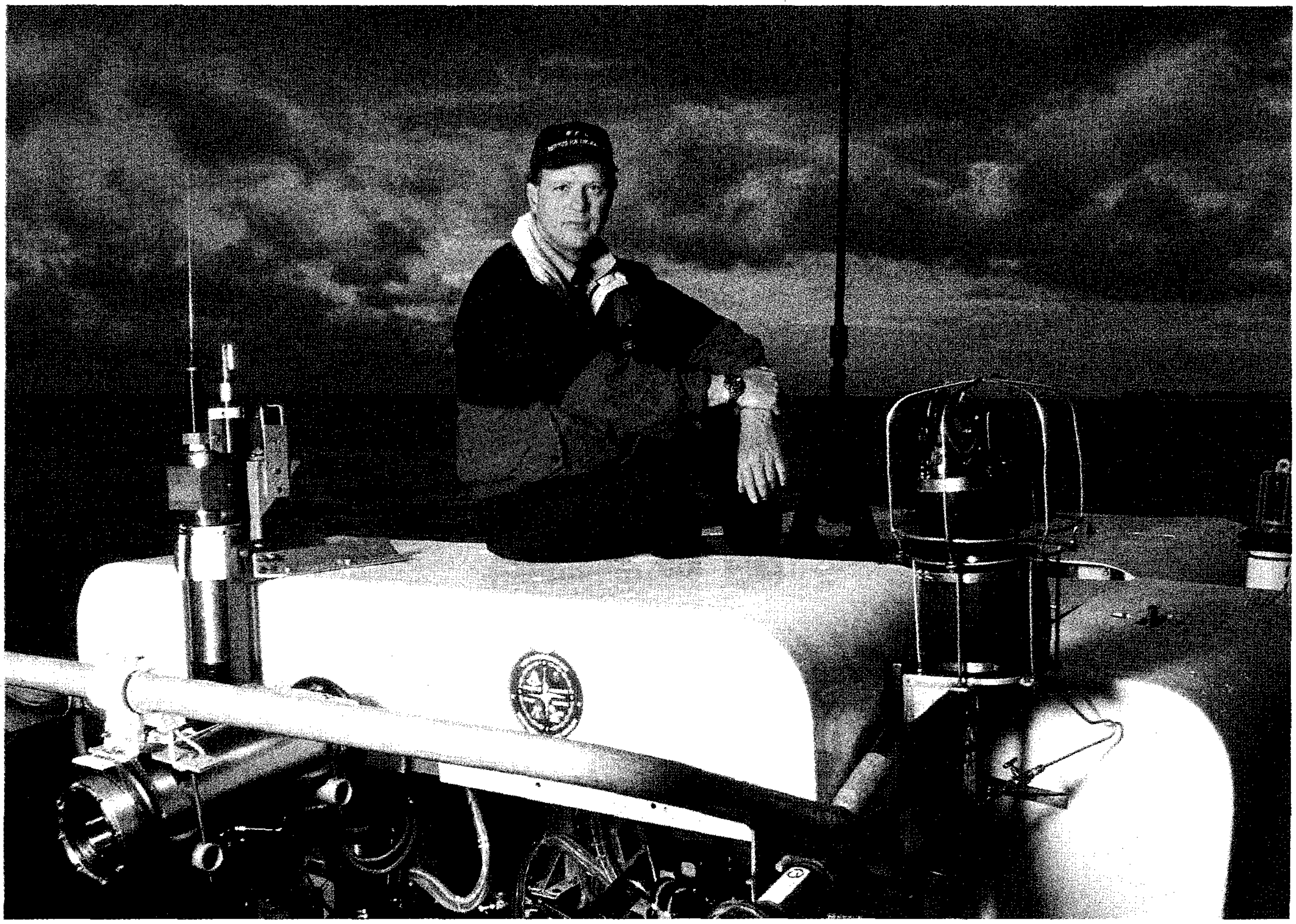
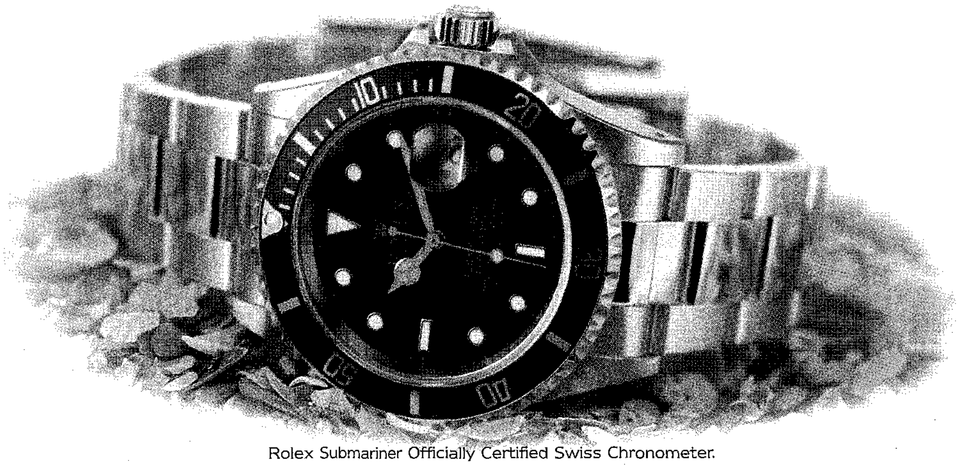


Dr. Ballard, during an expedition in the Pacific, atop the ATV (Advanced Tethered Vehicle)

Using remote controlled vehicles and submarines, Dr. Ballard has found, among others, the *Titanic*, the *Bismarck*, and ancient shipwrecks. His favorite piece of oceanographic equipment, however, is his Rolex Submariner.



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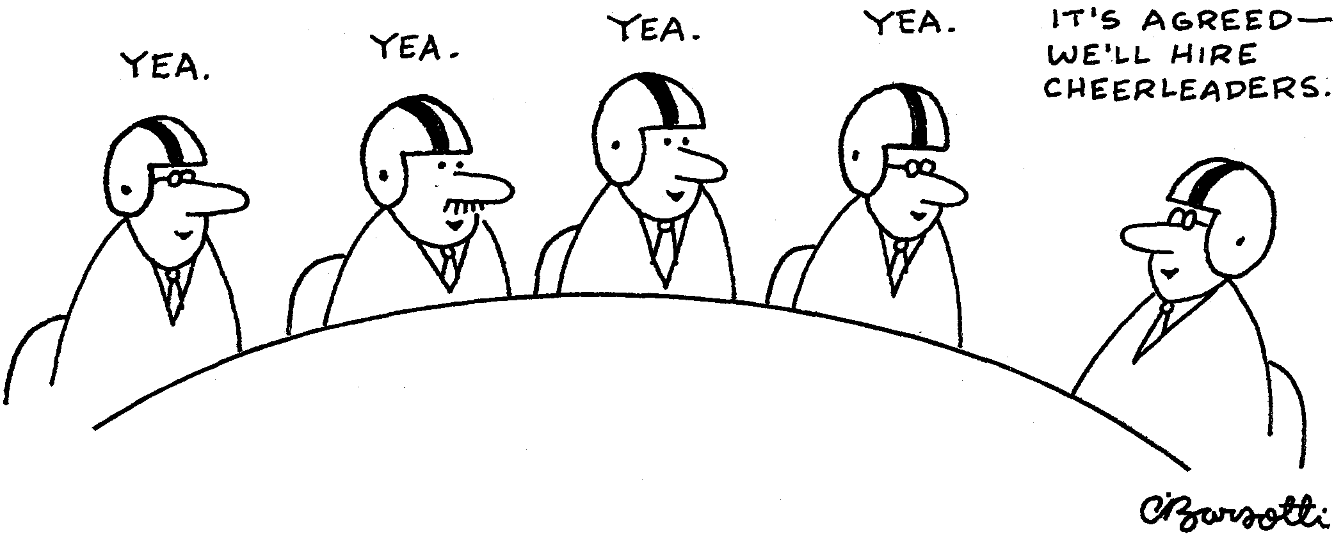
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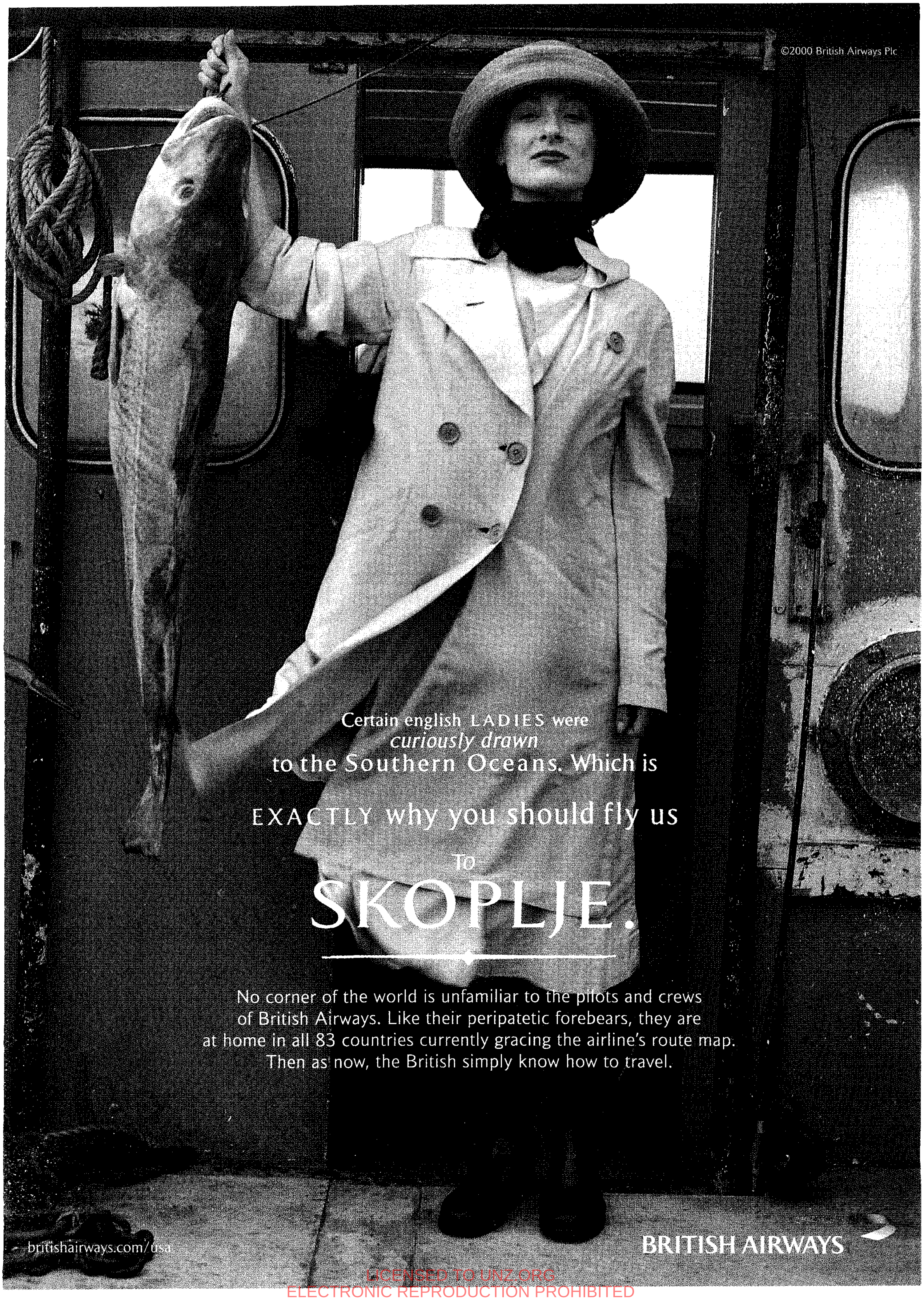©2000 British Airways Plc

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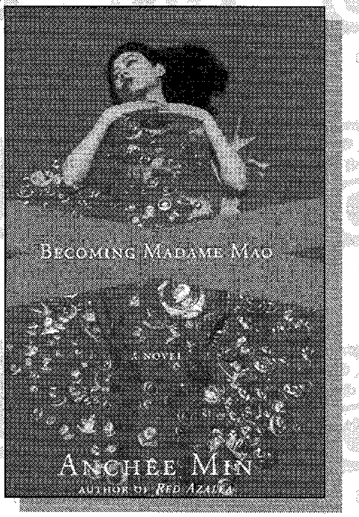

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CONTRIBUTORS

Roger Angell ("Tales of the Bronx," p. 134) has been a fiction editor at the magazine since 1956 and a contributor since 1944. He is working on a biography of David Cone.

Isaac Bashevis Singer (Fiction, p. 154), an émigré from Warsaw who wrote primarily in Yiddish, died in 1991. Many of his short stories first appeared in these pages. A collection of his previously untranslated works, "More Stories from My Father's Court," will be published in November.

Robert Pinsky (Poem, p. 114) is the Poet Laureate of the United States. His most recent collection is "Jersey Rain."

Mark Singer (The Talk of the Town, p. 66; The Sporting Life, p. 139) is the author of three books: "Funny Money," "Mr. Personality," and "Citizen K."

Julian Barnes ("The Hardest Test," p. 94) has written eight novels, including, most recently, "England, England."

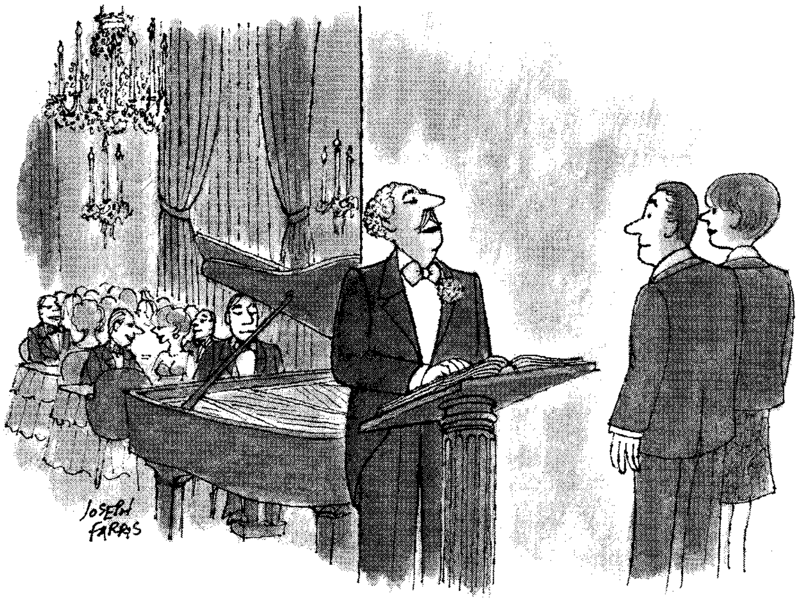
Martin Schoeller (Portfolio, p. 120), a staff photographer, won an Alfred Eisenstaedt award for new talent in magazine photography this spring.

David Owen ("The Chosen One," p. 106) is a staff writer. He has written and edited several books about golf.

Susan Orlean (The Sporting Life, p. 117) has published three books, including "Saturday Night" and "The Orchid Thief."

Larissa MacFarquhar ("Horse Country," p. 70) is a staff writer.

Malcolm Gladwell ("The Art of Failure," p. 84) published his first book, "The Tipping Point," in March. ♦



"Mets or Yankees?"

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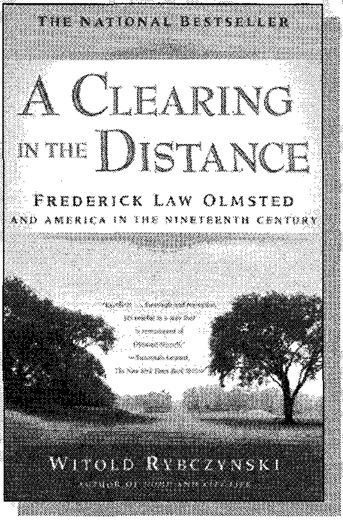
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REMEMBERING WILLIAM MAXWELL

Several years ago, my book group read one of William Maxwell's early novels, "The Folded Leaf" (Maxwell's obituary appeared in The Talk of the Town, August 14th). We noticed that we had three different editions, in which we found subtle yet important differences in the text and characters; one version even had an additional chapter tacked onto the end, giving the book an upbeat ending. We wrote to Mr. Maxwell to ask how something like this could have happened, never really thinking we would hear back. Within two days, I received a letter explaining that he had done four versions of the book, the last while he was in analysis with Theodor Reik, "who had his work cut out for him to keep me from burning the novel in the fireplace." He went on, "I couldn't believe it would interest anybody, being merely about schoolboys. When I finished it I was exhausted and believed whatever people said about the book. My editor at Harpers thought the minor characters needed strengthening so I combined Hope and Mrs. Lieberman into one person. And Theodor Reik thought the book ought to have a positive ending, so I wrote Chapter 62. . . . When I reread the novel ten years after it was published, I regretted these changes and felt I had got it right the way I first had it. . . . You are the first person in fifty years that has pointed out the difference."

Barbara Iams Korein
Chappaqua, N.Y.

DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO

Alma Guillermoprieto's article on the recent elections in Mexico ("Enter Harpo," July 24th) overlooks a central and pioneering influence on the development of electoral democracy there: liberal intellectuals like Daniel Cosío Villegas, who was a scathing critic of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, and Octavio Paz, who gathered a group of writers around the magazine *Vuelta*, which he founded in the mid-seventies to argue for the political maturation of Mexico and the pressing need to move from a monopolistic regime toward a more open, free, and plural society.

Enrique Krauze
Mexico City

THE HEROES OF HOGWARTS

Joan Acocella's review of "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (Books, July 31st) demythologizes J.K. Rowling's work in a wonderful way. She makes it patently clear that, contrary to the assertions of some religious conservatives, these books mean no harm. Indeed, I am grateful for Acocella's help in studying these wonderful stories and providing preachers everywhere with sermon material.

The Reverend Martha Honaker
Fayetteville, N.C.

I disagree with Joan Acocella's assertion that there is no sexism at Hogwarts. In the world of "Harry Potter," there is Harry (a boy hero); Dumbledore (a male wizard who runs Hogwarts); Cornelius Fudge (the Minister of Magic); and *He*-who-must-not-be-named (the villain). Acocella claims that Harry's friend Hermione was not forced to "take off her glasses [and] unpin her hair" to make herself attractive. Yet, at the Yule Ball, when Hermione shines up her hair, shrinks up her teeth, and puts down her books—*then* she's liked by a boy. I'm a ten-year-old girl, and it's clear to me that the very best and very worst wizards in Rowling's world are all boys, except for Lily Potter, who's dead.

Olivia Batker Pritzker
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

•

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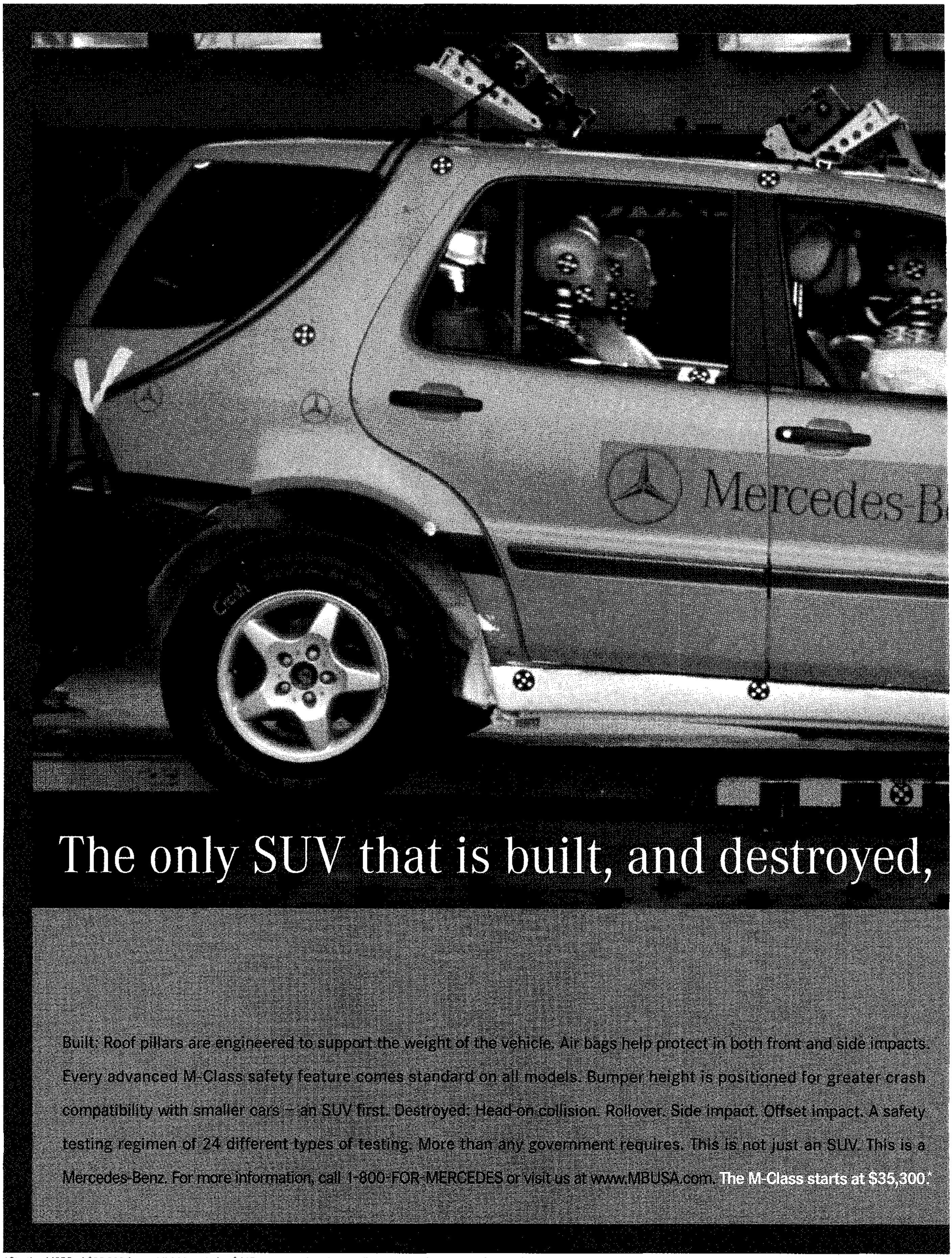The only SUV that is built, and destroyed,

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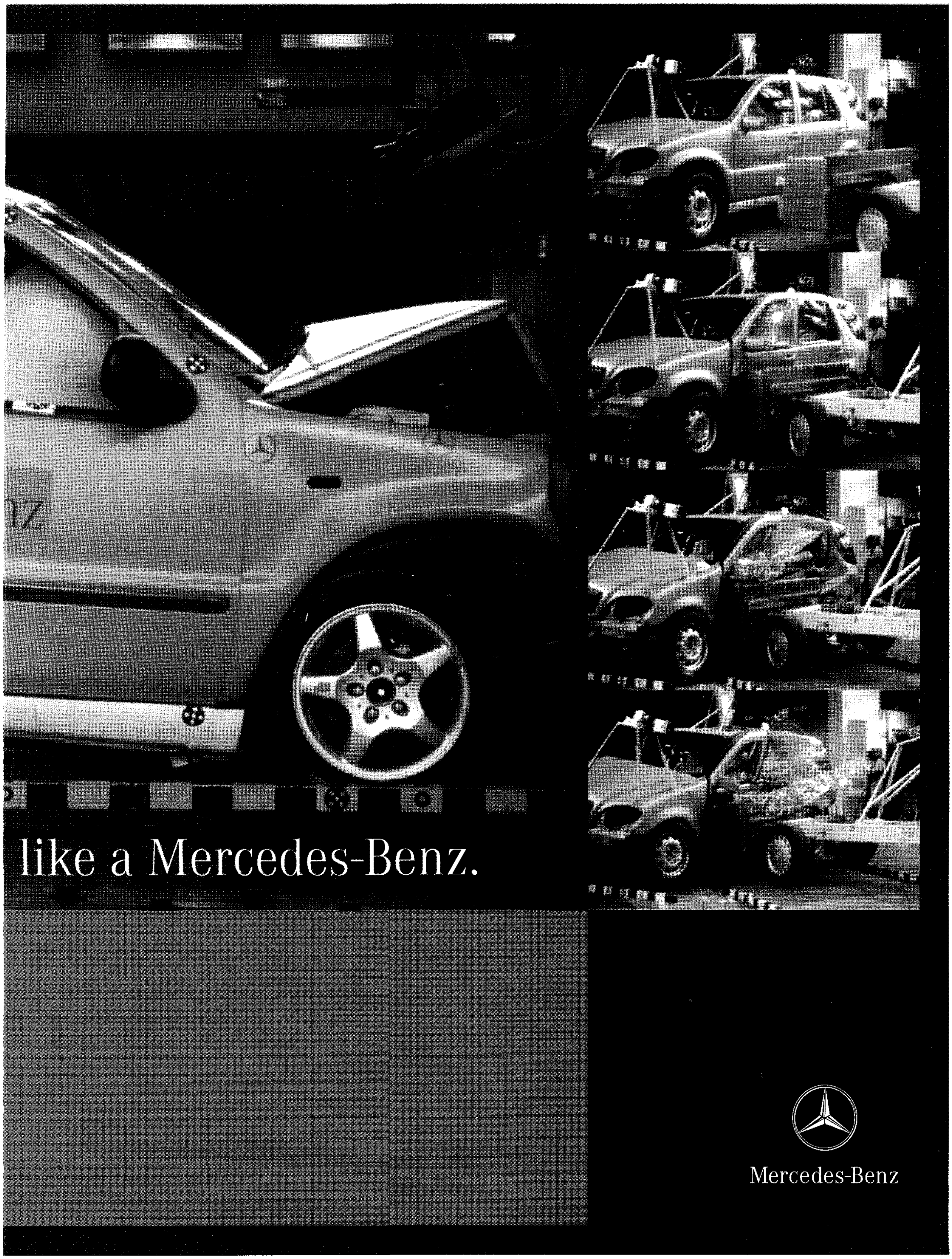

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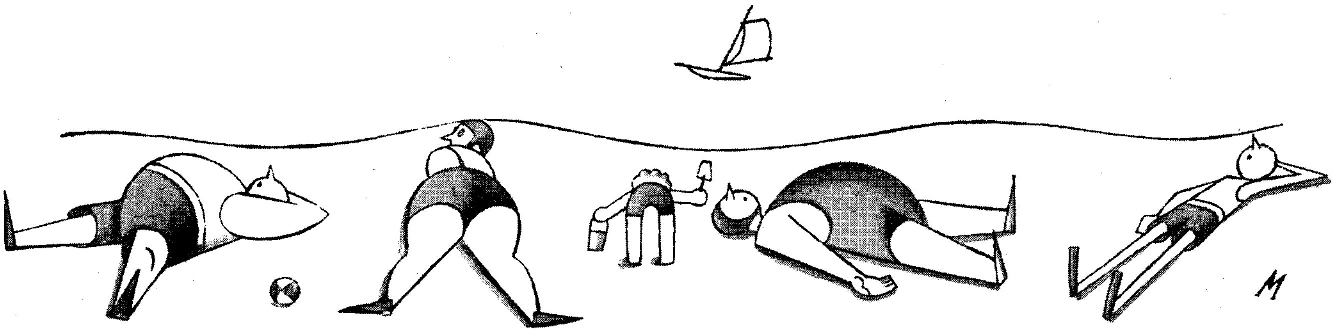

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AQUILA THEATRE COMPANY
The British-American touring troupe continues its New York residency with Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac." Previews Aug. 17-19. Opens Aug. 20 at 7 and continues through Sept. 17. (Clark Studio, Lincoln Center. 307-4100.)

DON JUAN IN HELL
Donal Donnelly, Celeste Holm, James A. Stephens, and Fritz Weaver give a dramatic reading of the third-act dream scene from Shaw's "Man and Superman," under the direction of Charlotte Moore. Previews Aug. 15-19. Opens Aug. 20 at 7 and continues through Sept. 17. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

IMPERFECT CHEMISTRY
A musical comedy by Albert M. Tapper and James Racheff, about two geneticists at a philanthropic laboratory who are seduced into finding a cure for baldness. In previews through Aug. 23. Opens Aug. 24 at 8. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave. between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

JULIUS CAESAR
Barry Edelstein directs a cast led by David McCallum, Jeffrey Wright, Jamey Sheridan, and Dennis Boutsikaris in the New York Shakespeare Festival's second outdoor production of the season. In previews through Aug. 19. Opens Aug. 20 at 8 and continues through Sept. 3. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL
A fortnight of experimental, multidisciplinary, and multimedia performances, by troupes from sixteen states and twelve countries, presented at various downtown venues. Aug. 16-27, from 3 P.M. to midnight daily. For information about events, performance times, and tickets, call 420-8877.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIDA
Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

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27	28					

AVOW
A progressive priest refuses to preside over the wedding of two gay men, in a new drama by Bill C. Davis ("Mass Appeal"). (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

BAAL
The Bat Theatre Company's version of Brecht's first play. (The Flea, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407. Closes Sept. 2.)

BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK
George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly's 1924 comedy gets a hip-hop/funk/rap revival by the Peccadillo Theatre Company. (Bank Street Theatre, 155 Bank St. 592-3312. Closes Aug. 27.)

BLUEPRINT SERIES
The Ontological Theatre's annual festival for emerging directors, presenting works staged by Jyana S. Gregory, Tony Torn, and the team of Ryan Brown, Franklin Laviola, and Brian Walsh. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Aug. 20.)

CAPITOL STEPS
The musical-theatre troupe's latest political satire, "It Ain't Over 'Til the First Lady Sings." (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO CITY LIMITS
The improv company presents a new revue, "Chicago City Limits Turns 20: Now and Forever . . . and We Mean It." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. 888-5233.)

COPENHAGEN
Michael Frayn's play speculates on the controversial 1941 reunion of the two giants of quantum mechanics—the physicists Niels Bohr (Philip Bosco) and Werner Heisenberg (Michael Cumpsty). It is so meticulous, so admirable, and so grave that you want to tousle its well-kempt appearance and tell it to lighten up. Nevertheless, the director, Michael Blakemore, manages to make dynamic and suggestive an evening that consists of three actors (Blair Brown plays Margrethe Bohr) and three chairs. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE CRUMPLE ZONE
A dark comedy by Buddy Thomas, set during a Christmas gathering of five gay men. (Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. 206-1515. Closes Sept. 10.)

DIRTY BLONDE
Mae West's flirty and dirty persona is the subject of a cunningly written, raffish evening conceived by the writer-actress Claudia Shear and the director James Lapine. Mae's story is recounted with brio by two fans—Jo (Shear, who doubles winningly as Mae) and Charlie (Tom Riis Farrell).The success of the play rests not on the louche facts of West's life but on the intersection of her story with the sweetness of the evolving relationship between the two lost souls who narrate it. (2/7/00) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

GODSPELL
An updated version of the 1971 rock musical, with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200.)

HIGH INFIDELITY
In John Dooley's comedy, John Davidson and Morgan Fairchild star as a Presidential candidate and his wife, who are forced to participate in marriage counselling by their political party. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

HIP-HOP THEATRE FESTIVAL
Two one-woman shows: "Surface Transit," by Sarah Jones, who portrays eight urban characters, and "Sistah Supreme," an autobiographical piece by Liza Colón-Zayas. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Aug. 26.)

THE JERUSALEM SYNDROME
There's no hell like being a seer in modern times, but it's a burden that the mystically neurotic, hyperintelligent comic Marc Maron gladly bears in order to make us laugh. He's fully aware of all the dubious idols that have replaced God in our culture, and he pulls no punches in pointing them out. In his one-man show, a heartbreakingly funny, faux-naïf travelogue, he leads the audience into purgatory and back, as he tries to find some kind of spiritual resonance in Hollywood fame, cigarettes, the Wiz, Coke (and coke), and Israel, where, he claims, he just wasn't "Jewy" enough to achieve the transcendence the land offers to the less materialistic. (On a plane headed for the Holy Land, he informs a rabbi that he's brought along a Sony camcorder to document his inevitable transformation. The rabbi's response? "I could have gotten you a better deal.") Maron may not be the Messiah, but he's definitely the guy to tell you where you won't find Him. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes Aug. 26.)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
This misguided Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1971 musical version

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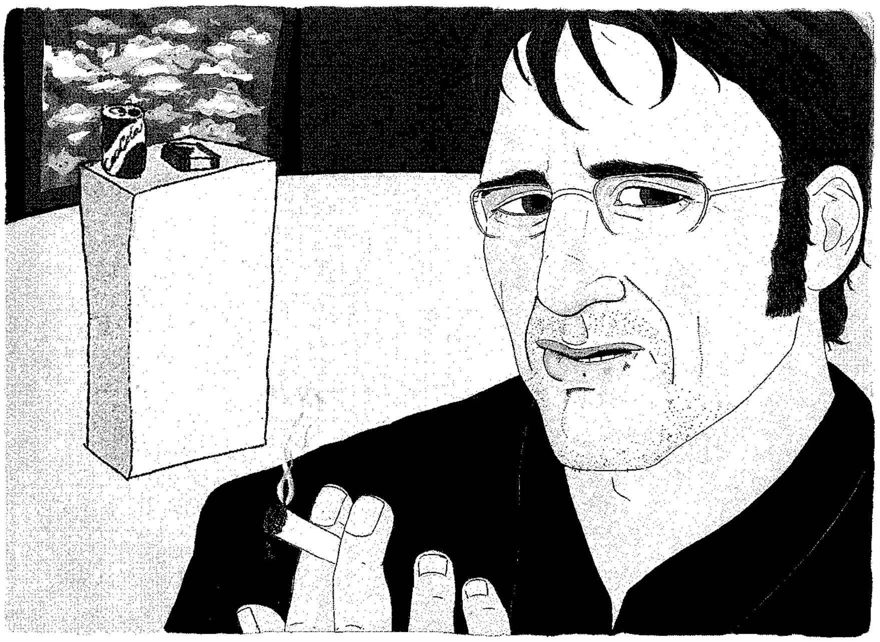
of the Saviour's last days on earth starts out by asking the tantalizing question "What's the buzz?" but never delivers a theatrically satisfying answer. Still, with its archaic whiff of right-wing outrage and its singable seventies-rock score, it's fun for nostalgia's sake. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 3.)

JITNEY
August Wilson's play is set in a car-service station in 1977, in a part of Pittsburgh which is being demolished faster than it's being renovated. In this atmosphere of decay, Wilson's characters struggle with themselves and with one another to find some hope, and some peace, amidst the rubble. The cast of nine wonderful actors hit perfect notes of collision and cohesion, and turn what might otherwise be a draggy experience (the play runs to nearly three hours) into a riveting and moving one. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

JOE FEARLESS (A FAN DANCE)
A great and irresistible idea—above-the-rim basketball choreographed for the stage—attached to a goofy melodrama, in which the title character loses his job, wife, kids, and even his TV as a result of his fanatical devotion to his team. The basketball overshadows the drama, which takes place smack in the middle of the games (literally: the alley-oop passes sail right over the TV-room couch). But the athlete-actors pull off Globetrotter high jinks right on cue, the cheerleaders dance with exaggerated licentiousness, and the accompanying jock interviews and talk-radio postmortems are both on target and hilariously over the top. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 3.)



Marc Maron, in "The Jerusalem Syndrome," at Westbeth Theatre Center.

LARA TOMLIN

THE LARAMIE PROJECT
The story of the gay-hate murder of Matthew Shepard and its media-saturated aftermath, told from the points of view of Laramie, Wyoming, residents—a gay activist, a Baptist preacher, a storekeeper, a sheriff, a bartender, and others, all performed by a virtuoso cast of eight. Members of Moisés Kaufman's Tectonic Theatre Company conducted some two hundred interviews about the murder; the play's text consists of excerpts of those interviews, of court transcripts, and of journals kept by company members. Unlike Kaufman's 1997 "Gross Indecency," which offered a fresh perspective on the oft-told tale of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, this play, by refusing to make a judgment, simply retells a familiar story. Nonetheless, the heart-wrenching experiences and flashes of insight do open a window on the human tragedy, despite the overwhelming objectification surrounding it. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 2.)

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER
The Roundabout's revival of Kaufman and Hart's evergreen 1939 satire of Hollywood and of New York literary society is pure gold. Nathan Lane is back onstage where he belongs, playing Sheridan Whiteside, a noxiously pompous critic and radio personality who commandeers the bewildered family and staff of a staid Ohio household—where he slipped on ice after a dinner in his honor and ended up in a wheelchair. Lane is hilarious as he spins around the stage, dressed in an elegant smoking jacket and barking orders and insults between puffs of cigarette and international phone calls. The play itself is a model of comic construction and is chockfull of vintage stage business, which the excellent cast executes with gleeful nineteen-forties snap. Jean Smart, Byron Jennings, and Lewis J. Stadlen, as three famous personalities who pop in for a visit, are all brilliant. With terrific sets and costumes by Tony Walton and William Ivey Long, respectively. Jerry Zaks is the director. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

THE MUSIC MAN
A delightful revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical, directed by Susan Stroman and starring Craig Bierko, who is making his Broadway début in the role of Professor Harold Hill. The show hits us with the simplicity and seamlessness of a perfect fairy tale, and it puts music in its proper place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. (5/22/00) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

NEIL SIMON'S HOTEL SUITE
The setups for these reheated fragments from Simon's "Suite" plays have the feel of stale seventies sitcoms, but they rate high on the middle-aged crowd's Laff-O-Meter and capture, however unwittingly, the innocence and humor of decades past. The cast (Helen Carey, Randy Graff, Leigh Lawson, Ron Orbach, Charlie McWade, and Amanda Serkasevich) all shine in their own ways. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 3.)

NEVER SWIM ALONE
In Daniel MacIvor's tersely orchestrated dark comedy, two pinstripe-wearing, briefcase-carrying, cliché-blaring businessmen who've been friends and playmates since boyhood face off as adults for twelve rounds of friendly male competition (who's taller, better at his job, better endowed, etc.). The boasts and thinly veiled insults become increasingly vicious and destructive with each round, knowingly refereed by a woman who turns out to be an early casualty of their lifelong contest, a ghost from their past. The play lacks essential narrative drama, but it's a surprisingly powerful examination of the dangers of male rivalry, and the three very good young actors (Douglas Dickerman, John Maria, and Susan O'Connor) give it a beguiling richness. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

RIVERDANCE
The Irish troupe of dancers, singers, and musicians. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
John Travolta is not easy to replace, nor are the ashes of disco fever likely to reignite, as this show, based on the 1977 movie, demonstrates. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SPINNING INTO BUTTER
Rebecca Gilman's surprising, well-crafted play about a racist incident at a mostly white Vermont liberal-arts college, where, as one character puts it, "not being racist means you got along really well with your nanny." When someone pins a hate letter on the door of one of the school's only black students, the administration stumbles around in a comically paranoid, disturbing stupor, trying to keep the public-relations lid on and obliviously applying righteous public-forum Band-Aids to a gaping social wound. The drama is subtle, yet more powerful than it seems at first: the audience never meets the wronged black student, and the only honest feelings about racial divisiveness are expressed out of range of the censoring ear of inept authority. Hope Davis, who delivers a genuinely troubled monologue as a dean of students, leads the fine cast. Daniel Sullivan is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DER YIDDISHER PINAFORE
An adaptation by the Gilbert and Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company. Aug. 18 and Aug. 25 at 8:30, and Aug. 19 and Aug. 26 at 2 and 7. (Theatre at the New 14th Street Y, 344 E. 14th St. 206-1515.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

THE COUNTESS
Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY
Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.

FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

FULLY COMMITTED
Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

JEKYLL & HYDE
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.

SWING!
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

TONY 'N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

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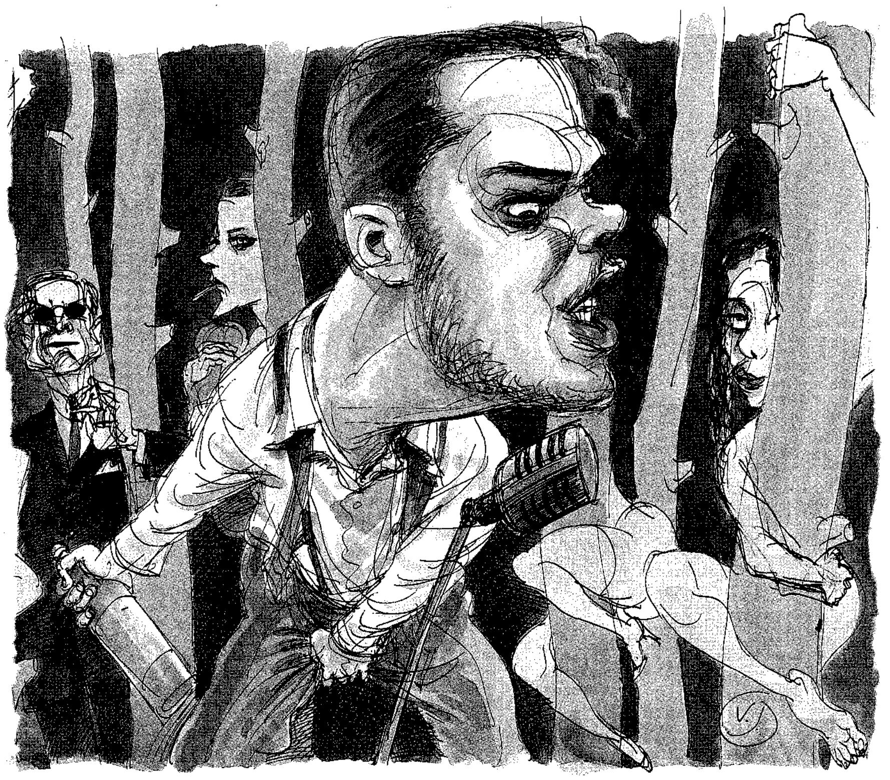


The Bat Theatre Company's staging of Bertolt Brecht's "Baal," at the Flea.

VICTOR JUHASZ

DANCE

LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO

Aug. 14-15, Aug. 18, Aug. 21, Aug. 23, and Aug. 25-26 at 8: "Les Sylphides"; "Go for Barocco"; a selection of pas de deux from "Le Corsaire," "Don Quixote," and "Diana and Acteon"; "Dying Swan"; and "Raymonda's Wedding." ♦ Aug. 16-17, Aug. 22, Aug. 24 at 8, Aug. 19 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 26 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Cross Currents," "Russian Dance," "Pas de Quatre," and "Paquita." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

LINCOLN CENTER OUT-OF-DOORS FESTIVAL

This month's free alfresco performance festival includes generous helpings of dance. Aug. 16 at 10:30 A.M.: Donald Byrd/The Group. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 16 at 6: La Santa Luz Dance Company and Gestures Dance Theatre. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 16 at 8: Donald Byrd/The Group. (Damrosch Park.) ♦ Aug. 20 at 3: Rokia Traore. (North Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 20 at 5: Sounds of Korea. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 22 at 5:30: Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 25 at 5:30: The Maximo Damian Scissors Dancers, of Ayacucho, Peru. (North Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 25 at 6:45: The Harambee Dance Company. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 26 at 3: Kenny Banks and Rhythm Makers. (North Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 27 at 5: The Maimouna Keita School of African Dance. (Robertson Plaza.) (For the complete festival schedule, call 875-5108. Through Aug. 27.)

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL

More than a hundred performances at twenty venues by some thirty dance companies, from New York and Europe. Aug. 18 at 8, Aug. 22 at 8:15, Aug. 24 at 11:30, and Aug. 26 at 10:30: "Wanted: X Cheerleaders," choreographed by Jody Oberfelder and directed by Kim Irwin. (Context Studios.) ♦ Aug. 16 at 9:15, Aug. 18 at 9:30, Aug. 20 at noon, Aug. 22 at 5:45, Aug. 24 at 7, and Aug. 26 at 5:15: "Three Worse Flowers," choreographed by Vickie Mendoza, for vicdog3D. (University Settlement.) ♦ Aug. 17 at 7:30, Aug. 18 at midnight, Aug. 19 at noon, Aug. 20 at 1:30, Aug. 22 at 3:30, and Aug. 24 at 7:30: "Synchronized Swimming—The Dry Version," performed by Ursus and Nadeschkin. (Kraine Theatre.) ♦ Aug. 17 at 8:15, Aug. 19 at 12:30, Aug. 21 at 10:30, Aug. 24 and Aug. 26 at 4, Aug. 25 at 7, and Aug. 27 at 4:45: "With the Clearness Comes the Cold," performed by the Cy.ancal company, from Linz, Austria. (Paradise Theatre.) (For complete festival information, call 420-8877.)

BRYANT PARK PRESENTS

Free performances by nicholasleichterdance (Aug. 18) and Cortez and Company Contemporary/Ballet (Aug. 25). (Bryant Park, 42nd St. and Sixth Ave. All performances at 6.)

"SUMMER FEVER"

The choreographer Daniel Gwirtzman and his fourteen-member company present twelve works, including six premières (two of them odes to the disco era), in seventy-five minutes. (The Flea, 41 White St. 226-2407. Aug. 16-19 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL

Aug. 16-18 at 8, Aug. 19 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 20 at 2: O Vertigo Danse. ♦ Aug. 17-18 at 8:15 and Aug. 19-20 at 5: Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. ♦ Aug. 23-25 at 8, Aug. 26 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 27 at 2: Alonzo King's LINES Contemporary Ballet. ♦ Aug. 24-25 at 8:15, Aug. 26 at 5 and 9, and Aug. 27 at 5: Noche Flamenca. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

NEIL YOUNG

Young is a genre unto himself: on any given night, he's capable of achieving both satori and self-parody, sometimes in the course of a single verse. On most evenings, though, he performs with the stoic grace of a rock-and-roll royal; this time, he'll be focussing on the hushed lullabies that fill his most recent record, "Silver & Gold." With the **Pretenders.** (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Aug. 17 at 7:30.)

LINCOLN CENTER OUT-OF-DOORS FESTIVAL

The following are musical highlights of this annual gathering. Aug. 18 at 7: The Cape Breton fiddler **Natalie MacMaster** caps an evening of Canadian music. ♦ Aug. 19 at 8:30: **Bruce Cockburn** and **Arlo Guthrie.** ♦ Aug. 25 at 8: **Hugh Masekela** and **Eddie Palmieri.** More than thirty years after "Grazing in the Grass" topped the R. & B. charts, the South African soul-jazz master is still tearing up the stage, jumping back and forth between the trumpet and the cowbell, and rattling off sermonlike stories between songs. Masekela may be sixty-one, but he has the energy and passion of a teen-ager. / Palmieri's fervent hard-bop and salsa-inflected rhythms don't always translate onstage, where the cigar-chomping pianist tends to grandstand, but when the pieces do fall together, it's a smoker of a show. Aug. 26 at 8: "Mingus Maximus." The well-stocked **Mingus Big Band** approaches the mighty jazz polymath's durable compositions with heft and power, while the **Mingus Orchestra** offers his more introspective, classically etched pieces. (All shows in Damrosch Park. No tickets necessary. For more information about the festival, call 875-5108.)

"GREAT JAZZ ON THE GREAT HILL"

The well-oiled **Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra** and the Afro-Cuban rhythm machine that is the **Machito Orchestra,** led by the legendary Mario Grillo, turn Central Park into an uptown version of the Roseland Ballroom. (Central Park, near Central Park W. and 106th St. Aug. 19 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

GUSTER

This distinctive Boston-based pop trio (two guitarists and a conga player) recently found itself in hot water after making disparaging remarks about a corporate sponsor during a concert in Chicago. Singer Ryan Miller was upset that people in gorilla costumes were running rampant before the group's performance, throwing Oldsmobile T-shirts into the crowd. Miller complained onstage, and didn't get all his money, but the band soldiers on. With the sunny, top-shelf Americana of Minneapolis's **Jayhawks.** (Central Park SummerStage, mid-Park at 72nd St. A benefit concert. For more information, call 360-2777. Aug. 19 at 7:30.)

A PERFECT CIRCLE

The Tool vocalist Maynard James Keenan and the guitarist Billy Howerdel (who has played with Smashing Pumpkins and Nine Inch Nails, among others) put this band together in Los Angeles last year. But this isn't a slapdash, cash-grabbing side project cooked up by a famous musician and his friend. The band experiments with the seam between heavy metal and alternative rock (it recorded its début album in Howerdel's garage), successfully pushing the boundaries of both genres and creating highly emotive, strangely melodic guitar rock. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Aug. 19 at 7:30.)

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS / DOUGHTY

John Flansburgh and John Linnell's trademark pop songs—as full of herky-jerky rhythms and surreal humor as ever—meet the hip-hop-styling, beat-poetry-referencing efforts of the former Soul Coughing front man. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St., Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-855-7882, ext. 45. Aug. 19 at 7:30.)

"DESTINATION: NEW ORLEANS"

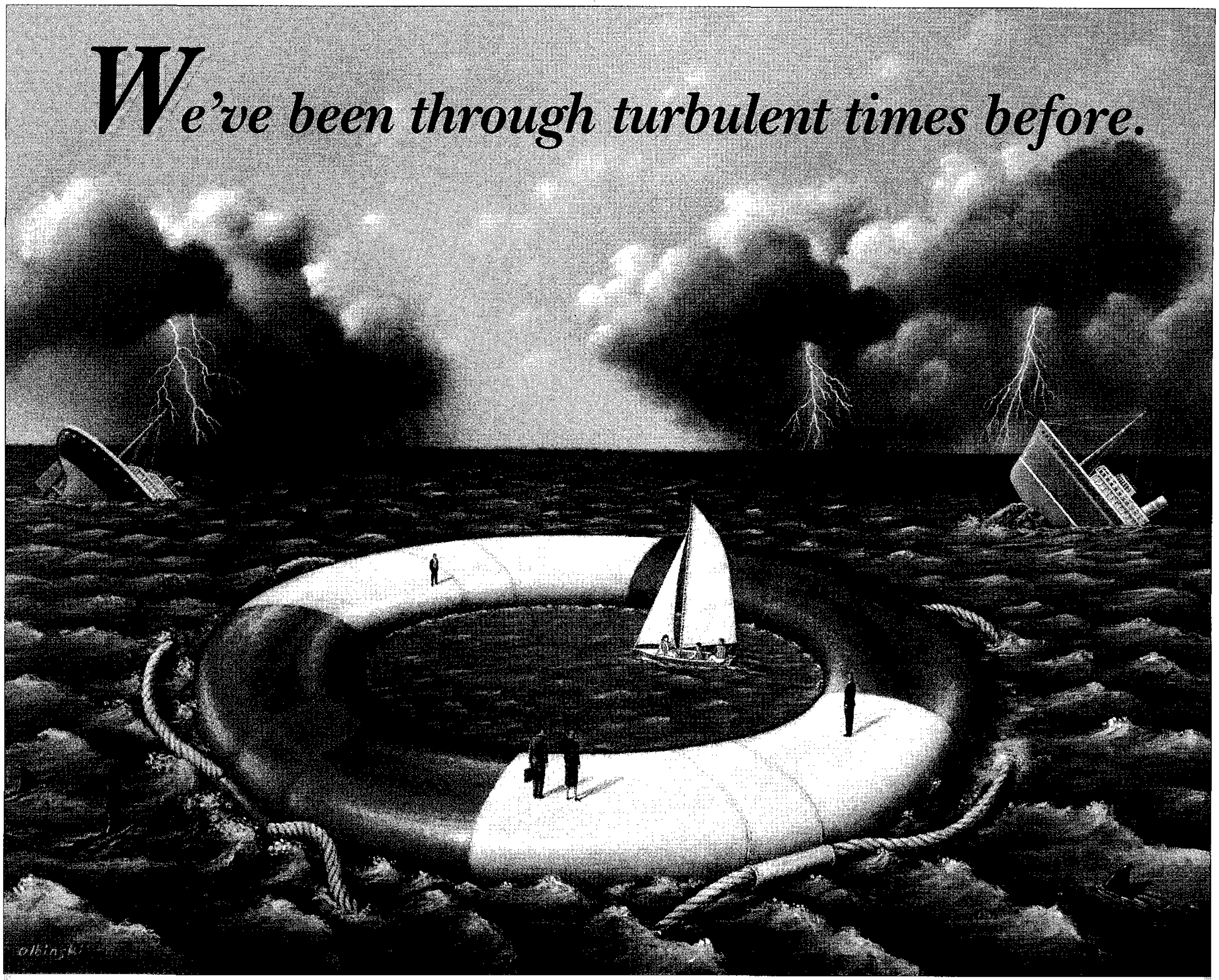
An evening of bayou rhythms with three inimitable performers: the great Creedence Clearwater Revival vocalist **John Fogerty,** the Crescent City native **Aaron Neville,** and the voodoo piano master **Dr. John.** (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 20 at 7.)

AC/DC

Twenty years after the bloodcurdling masterpiece "Back in Black" proved that this Australian quartet could persist after the tragic death of original vocalist Bon Scott, exactly nothing has changed in the AC/DC sound. On the band's latest, "Stiff Upper Lip," guitarist Angus Young tosses off chunky riffs, and vocalist Brian Johnson continues howling with a force capable of shaking the rafters, thus perpetuating one of rock's more wonderful formulas. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 307-7171. Aug. 24 at 8. ♦ Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Aug. 25 at 8.)

CHARLIE PARKER JAZZ FESTIVAL

It seems appropriate to split the annual Charlie Parker Jazz Festival between uptown and downtown venues this year, thus mirroring the ease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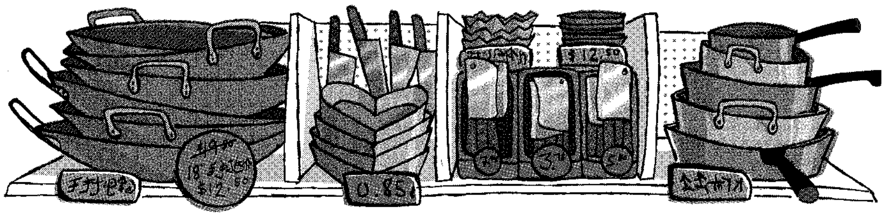
Get Cooking



EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Residing comfortably in the territory between a hardware store and a bijouterie, the upscale cookware shop offers the consolations of both: expert advice about how to use the tools and the not inconsiderable pleasure of viewing practical merchandise that also happens to be beautiful.

At the renowned **BRIDGE KITCHENWARE** (214 E. 52nd St.; 688-4220), where Julia Child used to buy her skillets, patrons wander around slack-jawed with wonder, as if contemplating the square cuts and pear shapes at Cartier, though the proprietress is quick to bring them back to earth. "The deal here is, we don't sell glitz: we sell functional, heavy, professional kitchen equipment," Mrs. Bridge, the widow of the shop's notoriously grumpy founder, says. The company has been around for sixty years, and so have some of the pots it has sold; Mrs. Bridge mentions, with barely concealed scorn, the melted handles and shameful seven-to-ten-year survival rates that afflict conventional cookware. Bridge's best-selling vessel—a twenty-eight-centimetre-deep sauté pan imported from France ($185)—is made of heavy-gauge stainless steel and is expected to last a lifetime, as are the shop's other headliners: stunningly elegant copper évasé pans with stainless-steel linings ($140) and satin-finished stainless Italian braising pans ready for autumn's first osso buco ($150). Though the pots and pans may be the star attractions, Bridge has a full cast of supporting players, including citrus zesters, strawberry hullers, and tomato sharks (for the rapid disembowelment of cherry tomatoes).

The philistine who is wont to prepare salad by simply tossing lettuce and vinaigrette into a cast-iron pan is not the intended customer at **J. B. PRINCE** (36 E. 31st St.; 683-3553), a silvery wonderland on the eleventh floor of a midtown office building. Prince discourages the aimless browser and openly favors the career chef. Still, even if you're not wearing checked pants and clogs, the place is willing to sell you an array of items, which includes Japanese one-piece stainless-steel chef's knives with dimpled grips (from $60). Less intimidating oval-shaped ice-cream scoops, weighty enough to withstand decades of excavation, are $22; a pale-green shredder fully able to transform lumpy vegetables into gossamer twists and wisps is $76.

HUNG CHONG IMPORTS (14 Bowery; 349-1463) is also geared toward the professional kitchen—but has an open-door policy and a total lack of pretension. There's a gargantuan hundred-quart, clambake-ready aluminum cauldron ($95.50) a few shelves away from another sort of restaurant-supply staple, the old-fashioned wooden mousetrap ($2.50). Just inside the door, wok ladles with rough-hewn wooden handles hang above stacks of those hard rubber Sani-tuff cutting boards that have earned a reputation among generations of serious cooks. Firm but flexible, with surfaces that can be cleaned easily, the boards have virtues that easily outweigh their aesthetic limitations.

Good looks return to the top of the agenda at **CARPE DIEM ANTIQUES** (187 Sixth Ave.; 337-0018), where a number of mid-century relics—Swing-a-way ice crushers, Pyrex percolators—conspire to turn the contemporary kitchen into the sort of place where June Cleaver could roll up her sleeves and get to work on supper. Many of the vintage kitchen items, including a particularly fetching eggbeater with a crimson Bakelite handle, still look capable of mixing up a little something for eager descendants of Wally and the Beav.

—*Lynn Yaeger*

with which the saxophone-playing jazz avatar moved between Harlem and the East Village. The Marcus Garvey Park show boasts a strong lineup that includes **Bobby Sanabria y Ascension**, the **Irene Reid** quartet, the **Winard Harper** sextet, the **David Glasser** quartet, with **Norman Simmons** and **Clark Terry**, and the **Lou Donaldson** quartet. (Fifth Ave. at 122nd St. Aug. 26, from 2 to 7. No tickets necessary.) ♦ The Tompkins Square Park bill trumps its uptown counterpart with an A-list contingent, highlighted by the **Stefon Harris** quartet, the **Joanne Brackeen** quartet, the all-star quartet **Sphere**, and the **James Moody** quartet, with special guest **Jon Faddis.** (Avenue A at 7th St. Aug. 27, from 2 to 7. No tickets necessary.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
243 W. 42nd St. (269-4849)—Aug. 19: From Detroit's Brewster housing project to the bright lights of Times Square, **Mary Wilson** carries on the legacy of the Supremes. Her appearance should be especially interesting given the recent failure of the much publicized Supremes "reunion" tour, in which the former lead singer Diana Ross bypassed Wilson for lesser-known singers culled from the Supremes' later days. Aug. 25-26: Guitarist **Taj Mahal** and his Phantom Blues Band stop by with their grooving tunes.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Aug. 22-24: The clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter **Dar Williams**, who helped redefine folk music in the nineties. After collaborating with fellow folk revivalists Lucy Kaplansky and Richard Shindell for 1998's album of pop covers, "Cry, Cry, Cry," Williams has returned to what she does best—intelligent, soulful songwriting—with her new release, "The Green World."

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Aug. 25: Summer fun with former Bongos front man **Richard Baron**, erstwhile Television guitarist **Richard Lloyd**, solo artist **Amy Rigby**, and the **Health & Happiness Show**, a country, folk, and rock outfit led by another ex-Bongo, James Mastro. Aug. 26: The sallow-faced, darkly charismatic Eugene Hutz—equal parts Sid Vicious and Bertolt Brecht—stops by with **Gogol Bordello**, a five-man band specializing in what it calls "Ukranian Gypsy surrealistic punk cabaret."

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Aug. 16: The seminal Bristol jungle producer and disk jockey **Roni Size** unleashes his ensemble Reprazent. ♦ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Aug. 21: **Kitty Wells,** the original queen of country music, appearing nine days before her eighty-second birthday.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 16: The young lead singer of **Antony and the Johnsons Orchestra** possesses a sweet and haunting voice reminiscent of Brian Ferry and a theatrical, pansexual stage presence that recalls early Marc Bolan. Aug. 18: **Jill Sobule,** a feisty post-punk feminist whose work brings to mind a cross between Liz Phair and Gertrude Stein, had a hit five years ago with the catchy single "I Kissed a Girl." Her 1997 follow-up album, "Happy Town," pleased many critics, but too few fans for the executives at Atlantic, who dropped her from the label. She bounced back earlier this year with a new album, "Pink Pearl," which is sure to get a run-through here. Aug. 19: Former P-Funk and Talking Heads keyboard genius **Bernie Worrell** jams with his band, the Woo Warriors.

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Aug. 18: **Doughty** (see Concerts) and **MC Paul**

Barman, a recent Brown graduate who's joking his way through the rap game with some help from hip-hop impresario Prince Paul. Prince Paul produced Barman's "It's Very Stimulating," on which the rapper stretches his bachelor's-degree lyrics to rhyme "booty" with "Susan Faludi" and "fructose" with "Chuck Close." Aug. 19: **Jill Sobule** (see Clubs—Knitting Factory).

WETLANDS
161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Aug. 17: A night of techno-laden jam-band music with the **New Deal.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Aug. 17-19: The R. & B.-coated jazz created by combining the Hammond organ and the saxophone has become a time-honored, wholly American dialect, and few artists speak it as eloquently as **Jimmy McGriff** and **Hank Crawford.** McGriff coaxes sweet-tempered blues out of his keyboard, while Crawford's alto exalts and cusses with funky aplomb. Aug. 23-26: The still brash former wunderkind **Jon Faddis** has always been a bravura trumpeter, but now he does it with maturity: the high-C dog calls that used to be his stock-in-trade are being replaced with ever-increasing lyrical invention. The melodic classicism of **Jimmy Heath's** tenor sax will provide a perfect foil. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 20: There was a time not so long ago when the Cuban pianist **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** couldn't leave a poor key alone. Coming on like a Latin Liszt, his superior technique muffled the personal charms of his playing. He's become sparer in recent years, allowing a gentler side to surface, and it's done a world of good for his music.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 20: **"Ellington Forever."** Just because Ellington was the jazz celebrity of last year (which was the centenary of the great man's birth) doesn't mean that the tributes to him have to end. Inaugurating what one hopes will be another hundred years of Ellingtonia is this ad-hoc ensemble of noteworthy mainstreamers, fortified by the brilliant saxophonist **Jimmy Heath,** the pianist **Roland Hanna,** the former Basie-band saxophonist and flutist **Frank Wess,** and the killer bass-and-drum team of **Ray Drummond** and **Kenny Washington.** Aug. 22-27: The **James Moody** quartet. Moody, a twisted sax and flute virtuoso with unblemished bop credentials, spikes his harmonically dense excursions with right-side-of-the-brain humor. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Aug. 20: The generation of mainstream jazzmen who came of age during the nineteen-eighties is fast approaching middle age, becoming older and wiser in the ways of orthodox swing and improvisation. The drummer **Carl Allen,** a familiar and dependable presence on bandstands for the past twenty years, has assembled a strong unit comprised of like-minded peers: trumpeter **Nicholas Payton,** saxophonist **Donald Harrison,** pianist **Eric Reed,** and bassist **Robert Hurst III.** Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 24-27: The drummer **Andrew Cyrille,** known best for his galvanizing work with the avant-jazz pianist Cecil Taylor, also has solid mainstream experience. Fellow-drummer **Billy Hart** has an equal amount of avant-garde seasoning. This engagement finds them pairing off during the early shows for percussive duets, after which these superbly inclusive drummers will be joined by a major saxophonist during the second set. Aug. 24 welcomes **Gary Bartz;** Aug. 25, **David Liebman;** Aug. 26, **David S. Ware;** and Aug. 27, **Joe Lovano.**

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ
351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Aug. 18-19: **Steve Wilson's** two recent recordings are solid, if a tad understated, neo-bop excursions. In performance, though, this crafty player makes his mark as a snappy, keen-witted saxophonist and flutist. His substantial work with Chick Corea's Origin lifts that band into the stratosphere on a regular basis. Aug. 25-26: The **Orrin Evans** trio. This is a great chance to check out one of the city's more acclaimed young pianists in a low-key, intimate setting.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 20: The **Charles McPherson** quartet. Alto saxophonist McPherson has called the West Coast home for decades now, but he hasn't gone cool on us yet. With a steaming rhythm section behind him, he can still conjure up the intensity of his classic early-sixties albums for the label Prestige. Aug. 22-27: The **Clark Terry** quintet. The brassman Terry needs both the trumpet and the flugelhorn to accommodate the torrent of notes that's always at the ready; the overflow gets handled by a spew of delightful vocal gibberish. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holds sway on Mondays.

ZINC BAR
90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Aug. 22-24: The Saxophonist **Leo Gandelman** gleefully incorporates the antic notions of free jazz into his mix of tropical music.

ROCK NOTES

STEADY-ROCKIN' MEN

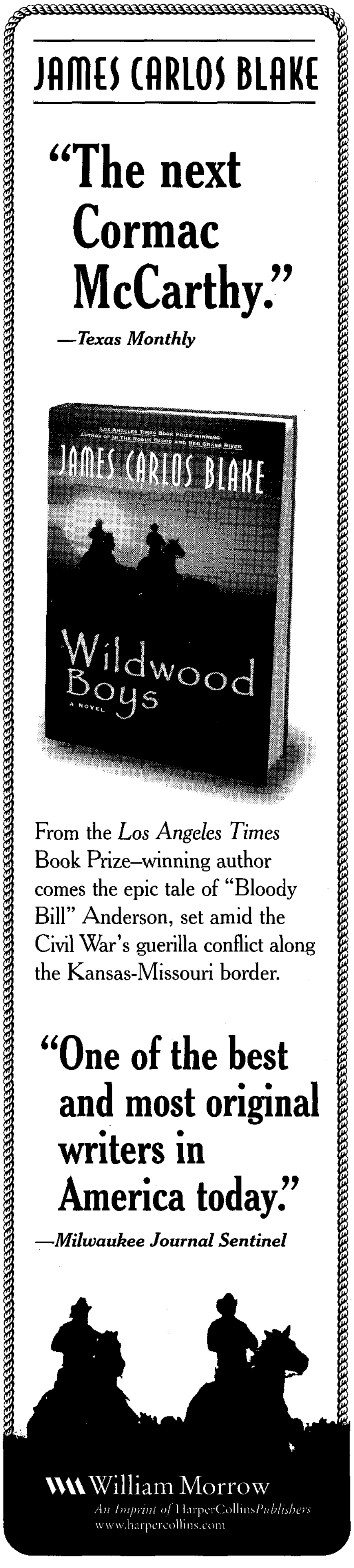
Singer-songwriters like Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, and Neil Young have justified their reputations with consistently interesting records. But what about the guitars-and-bars journeymen who have managed to produce impressive bodies of work without becoming legends?

Don Dixon, who has found modest fame as a producer for such acts as REM and the Smithereens, is also an underrated performer who possesses two emotive bass instruments (one vocal, the other stringed) and a songwriting talent for both the puckish and the poignant. Dixon's seventh solo record, **"The Invisible Man"** (Gadfly), is a concept album; each of the eleven songs takes a snapshot of the same male character at a different age, from eighteen to eighty-three. Unlike most concept records, there's nothing self-indulgent here—only passionate white soul-singing on both rockers ("Tax the Churches") and ballads ("High Night for the Tide").

Dennis Brennan, who was once the leader of the Boston-based rock band Push Push, is now well into an aesthetically rewarding, if financially unspectacular, solo career. His third record, **"Rule No. 1"** (Esca), stretches nuanced lyrics tightly over elemental rock-and-roll frames. Bits of Tom Petty pop up in the opening track, "I Got My Own"; elsewhere, Brennan recalls such angry young Brits as Graham Parker and Joe Jackson. In a season where designated roots-rock messiahs such as Steve Earle are coasting on less than stellar work, Brennan's latest release deserves attention.

While both Dixon and Brennan are rooted in American soil, Chris Knox, a New Zealander, offers an antipodal antidote. As half of the legendary Kiwi post-punk band Tall Dwarves, he earned renown for his ferocious onstage antics. Two decades later, Knox has mellowed into singer-songwriter mode without going soft; **"Beat"** (Thirsty Ear) finds him as psychologically complex and melodically inspired as ever. With beguiling tone poems like "The Pulse Below the Ear" and jaunty bits of nihilism like "The Hell of It," the album is a rush. And Knox is capable of more mature work, too—"Becoming Something Other" is one of the frankest, and saddest, songs ever written about a parent's impending death.

—Ben Greenman


JAMES CARLOS BLAKE

"The next Cormac McCarthy."

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ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The museum's entire collection of works by Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924), who was once hailed as "the poet laureate of the picnic," are exhibited together for the first time. Though the seventy pictures range from quick pencil and watercolor jottings to labored oils, the subject is always the same: happy throngs of anonymous pedestrians with their parasols, pinafores, and perambulators. When American prosperity was a delightful new condition, these sunny idylls must have looked soothing and fresh. A century later, their subject matter seems saccharine, their technique a watered-down version of Fauvist and Nabi styles. What endures is Prendergast's innocence. It's strangely comforting to imagine today's rollerbladers and day traders depicted with those same benign pats of pink, olive, and blue. Through Oct. 22. ♦ Jean-Siméon Chardin devoted himself to simple still-lifes and domestic scenes, creamy works of such beauty that the philosopher Diderot was moved to write, "The magic is incomprehensible." The painter captures his human subjects in moments of quiet reverie, and the show, the first such retrospective to hit New York, casts a similar spell. On the whole, his work is marked by a grace and dignity that reveal the miraculous in the everyday. Through Sept. 3. ♦ **"John Singer Sargent: Beyond the Portrait Studio."** Paintings, drawings, and watercolors from the collection. Through Sept. 24. ♦ **"Other Pictures: Vernacular Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection."** Through Aug. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Making Choices."** The twenty-four-part show concentrates on works made between 1920 and 1960, drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings, in a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist (Man Ray, Cartier-Bresson, Morandi). Closing, in stages, on Aug. 22, Sept. 19, and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"1900: Art at the Crossroads"** reopens a sort of art-world time capsule, contrasting representative works from the movements that took shape at the beginning of the past century. Through Sept. 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—**"The Art of Alice Neel,"** the museum's second retrospective devoted to the artist, and the first since her death, in 1984, offers seventy-five paintings and watercolors, including likenesses of artists (Andy Warhol, Robert Smithson), writers (Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Fearing), and family members. Through Sept. 17. ♦ **"Carnival Strippers: Photographs by Susan Meiselas."** Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The recently renovated Hayden Planetarium lets you enjoy a twenty-minute cosmic journey, narrated by Tom Hanks, which goes from Earth to the Milky Way out to the Virgo supercluster, then through a black hole right back home. Reservations for regular Space Shows are advised, and available at 769-5200. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—Anyone with a thirst for beverage trivia will want to belly up to the vitrines at **"Drink and Be Merry,"** a scholarly survey of wine and beer in antiquity. Viticultural methods may not have changed much in the last eight millennia, but drinking vessels certainly have, and most current receptacles pale in comparison to their ancient predecessors. Among the most beguiling of these con-

BOOK CURRENTS
Animal House

As the human genome map becomes more intelligible, we move closer and closer to a no-fault society—when in doubt, blame it on our genes. The Harvard economist Terry Burnham and the U.C.L.A. biologist Jay Phelan believe that the smallest personality quirks, from coffee addiction to the tendency to bite nails, are stitched into our DNA. They describe their new book, **MEAN GENES** (Perseus), as an "owner's manual for your brain." In fact, it is an unusual cross between a social Darwinist monograph and a self-help manual, offering tips on how to understand, and correct, such problematic behaviors as drug abuse, greed, and habitual debt.

If human beings find monogamy almost impossible to practice, we're not the only ones; our tendency to be disloyal is echoed in creatures all the way down the evolutionary ladder. In **PROMISCUITY** (Oxford), a study of the rough-and-tumble world of cuckoldry and sperm competition in the animal kingdom, Tim Birkhead reveals how the females of famously monogamous species—like the penguin—will seek out illicit, "extra-pair relations" to insure insemination.

Bruce Bagemihl's **BIOLOGICAL EXUBERANCE** (St. Martin's) examines infidelity beyond the breeding zone, rejecting the "heterocentrism" of conventional evolutionary biology, as well as the affiliated notion that animals tryst only for the purposes of mating. Bagemihl catalogues the lewd and purely pleasurable behavior, both heterosexual and homosexual, of nearly three hundred species, including orgies involving male bowhead whales and oral sex among stump-tailed macaques. Bonobo chimpanzees, which share more than ninety-eight per cent of their DNA with humans, enjoy what is surely one of the most libertine life styles on the planet, making merry with multiple partners regardless of gender, age, or even species.

—*William Cohen*

RODNEY ALAN GREENBLAT

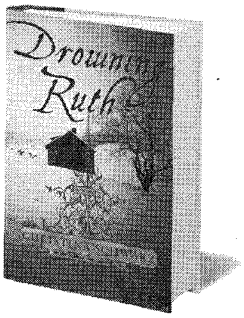
Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

5 Great Ways to End the Summer

DROWNING RUTH

by Christina Schwarz



Seeking solace at the end of World War I, nurse Amanda Starkey returns home to the family farm in Wisconsin to live with her sister and young niece Ruth. A year later, her brother-in-law comes home from the war and discovers his wife has mysteriously drowned and Amanda is now raising Ruth. (Doubleday)

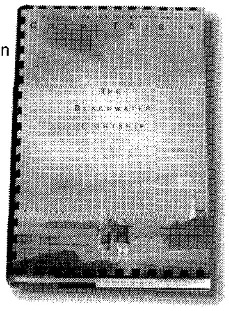
Pub. Price: $23.95

Discount **20%**

Our Price: $19.16

THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP

by Colm Tóibín



Deftly weaving a sentimental portrait of three generations of independent women brought together by tragedy, the fourth novel by award-winning author Colm Tóibín magnifies the similarities and differences of an estranged family reunited in the wake of an untimely death. (Scribner)

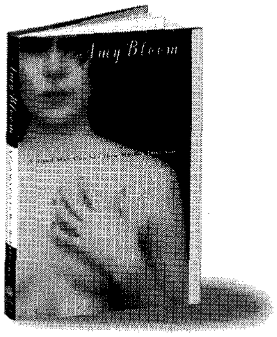
Pub. Price: $24.00

Discount **20%**

Our Price: $19.20

A BLIND MAN CAN SEE HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

by Amy Bloom



This moving collection of poignant short stories depicts love in a vast array of terms, from the bond between a mother and daughter as they face a monumental challenge, to the fragile triangle comprised of a cancer-stricken woman, a scared husband and a best friend. (Random House)

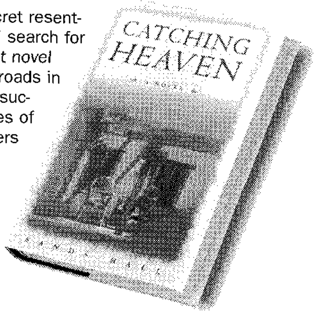
Pub. Price: $22.95

Discount **20%**

Our Price: $18.36

CATCHING HEAVEN

by Sands Hall



Dwelling on the complex bonds and secret resentments between siblings and the eternal search for home and connection, this touching first novel centers on two sisters, each at a crossroads in her life and coveting the other's "more successful" existence. Through a long series of difficult choices and mistakes, the sisters realize the importance of family and its ever-shifting boundaries. (Ballantine Books)

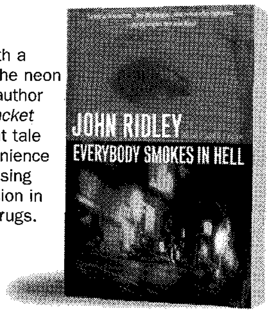
Pub. Price: $25.00

Discount **20%**

Our Price: $20.00

EVERYBODY SMOKES IN HELL

by John Ridley



Returning with a vengeance with a scorching novel of life among the neon glitz known as Hollywood, the author of *Stray Dogs* and *Love Is a Racket* cranks out a high-speed, violent tale about a down-on-his-luck convenience store clerk who makes a surprising discovery that leads to a mansion in Bel Air and a cache of stolen drugs. (Ballantine Books)

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Prices effective at store locations through 8/28/00 tainers is an ibex-shaped silver rhyton, which pours from its muzzle. Also on view are amphorae, kraters, kernoi (ring-shaped tubes from which several people can drink simultaneously), and the shallow cups used to play *kottabos,* the most popular Greek drinking game, in one version of which the winner was allowed to kiss anyone present. Through Nov. 5. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

DAN FLAVIN ART INSTITUTE
Corwith Ave., near Main St., Bridgehampton (631-537-1476)—The DIA Center for the Arts maintains this renovated firehouse as a permanent exhibition for Dan Flavin, the fluorescent-light minimalist who died in 1996. One exhibit changes from summer to summer. This season, it's "Icons: 1961-63," painted boxes fixed with fluorescent or incandescent bulbs (an early indication of the simplification he would practice for the rest of his career). Upstairs, "Nine Works," the permanent exhibition that Flavin installed in 1983, presents a selection of his glowing mature pieces, from a time when the artist limited himself to bulbs and fixtures. Through Sept. 10. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

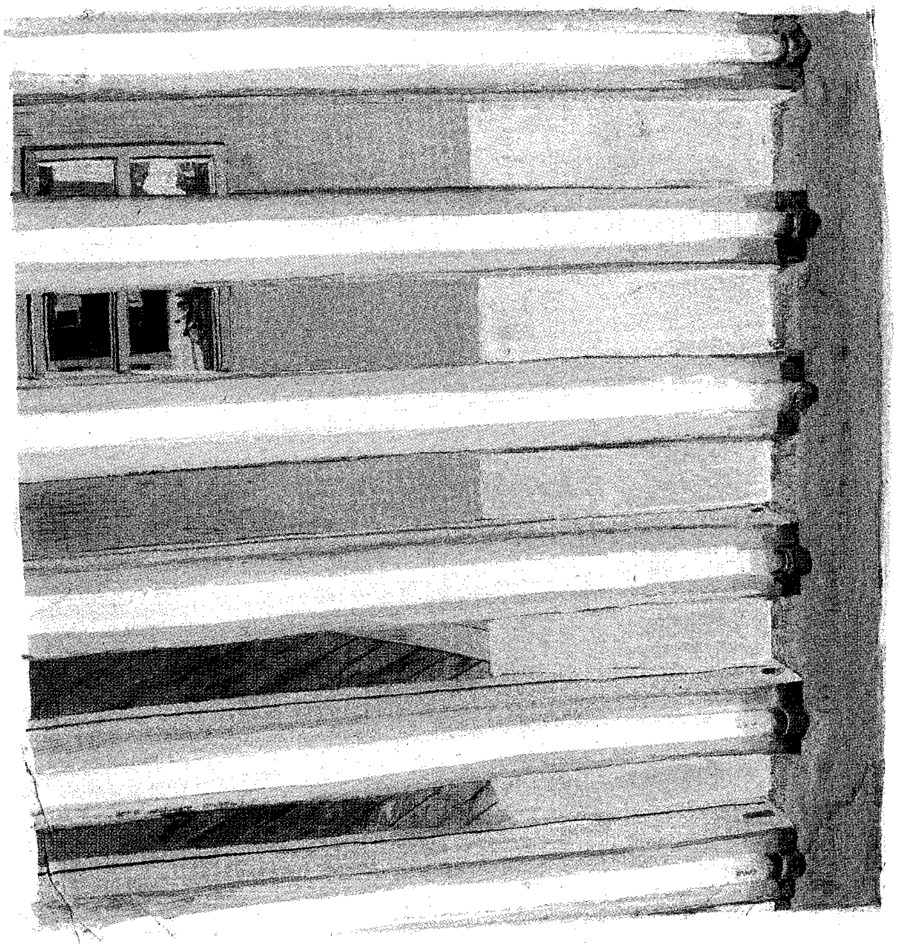
"FLUID FLOW"
The scientific study of fluid systems, known as flow visualization, provides the inspiration for this eclectic exhibition. Jennifer Bolande's porcelain sculpture from 1987, which re-creates Harold Edgerton's famous photograph of splashing milk, is a high point, as is Toshio Shibata's vertiginous black-and-white photograph of the Grand Coulee Dam. Newcomer Jess von der Ahe takes the concept of flow a bit too literally, using menstrual blood in lieu of pigment in fey paintings of concentric circles. Through Aug. 25. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767.)

"SCHOLASTIC ART AND WRITING AWARDS"
Long before Harry Potter cast his first spell, this juvenile-oriented publishing house was fostering talent in grade-school and high-school writers and artists with annual awards, the largest of their kind. Alumni include Sylvia Plath and Andy Warhol; current jurors include the poet Adrienne Rich and the gallery owner Gracie Mansion. This year, the recently established Corning Gallery has arranged to display ninety winning entries, which show remarkably little pretension and some solid work. Craft pieces are lower in number and impact than art on the wall, which includes good drawing, painting, and photography, with moments of excellence—even by grownup standards. One painting, a closeup of an altered Life board game, explains the push behind all this promise with the reward written on a square: "Win Scholarship, Collect $5000!" Through Sept. 24. (Corning, 667 Madison Ave., at 61st St. 646-497-3744.)

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

MELISSA RICHARD
Call it the glop aesthetic: a number of talented younger painters have been showing playful, splattery abstractions lately, as if they were hoping to enliven the discipline with a jolt of preschool high spirits. But while Jennifer Reeves and Elizabeth Cooper dish out their squirts and puddles of color cleanly, Richard prefers a lusher, messier look. Lavish trickles overlay one another across big sheets of primed paper, suggesting marbleizing effects gone awry. When she's not spilling or pouring, Richard flings, stirs, or squeezes out piles of pigment. The aim, one feels, is to evade, or at least to complicate, an atmospheric prettiness. Richards doesn't always succeed, but her best works, such as "Pine Valley Camp for Girls," have an explosive glee, like the floor under an infant's high chair. Through Sept. 9. (Moore, 140 W. 30th St. 279-8977.)

"OPULENT"
An unabashed devotion to beauty unites the artists in this exhibition of decorative abstraction. The front gallery is dominated by Richmond Burton's painting "Full Circle," a ground of wobbly, colored circles out of which emerges a single terra-cotta form vaguely reminiscent of an African sculpture. But best of show goes to Chris Ofilli's ecstatic "Mya," with its color-field splash of viscous blue amid a maelstrom of yellow dots. Through Sept. 1. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)



Fluorescent and incandescent light sculptures by Dan Flavin, on display at the Dan Flavin Art Institute, in Bridgehampton, Long Island.

RICCARDO VECCHIO

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

MARI EASTMAN
A recent move to L.A. brought Mari Eastman to her ideal artistic subject—glam. These pictures in acrylic, spray paint, embroidery, sticker, and glitter are full of elegant animals: swans, horses, pumas, and other beasts. In her more literal moods, the artist offers various enormous diamond rings, a drawing of a "Young Lady with Drink," and an acrylic painting of "Mari's Fabulous Opening." The miragelike shine of the city and the palm trees suggests Eastman's skepticism, and the lone sculpture of a movie star, "Chewbacca Reclining," brings home her sense of humor. Through Aug. 31. (Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083.)

"FURRY AND FEATHERED FRIENDS"
This small survey of animals in (mostly) folk art is billed as the gallery's summer "fun show," and it may be, at least for wildlife and pet fans. Highlights include a picture of oxen by an unknown artist, whose frame and painting are carved from a single piece of wood, then whittled and painted; Howard Finster's painting of a cheetah, cut to shape, hung with its feet at floor level; and William N. Copley's stretched-linen folding screen, "Promiscuous Bound," so insistently patterned and colored in background design that it takes a moment to notice that the two central figures, horse's behinds, are made up of naked human bodies, one all male and the other all female. On the reverse, a trompe-l'oeil scene of tools hanging on the screen is interrupted by a lacy trompe-l'oeil brassiere, which appears to be draped over the top. Through Aug. 18. (Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200.)

AUCTIONS

DOYLE
A summer auction of furniture, paintings, and decorative art works. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Aug. 17.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LIZ RIDEAL
English artist Rideal's first New York solo show is full of color images of fabric taken in a photo booth—romantic, minimalist work that mixes the formality and ephemerality of Agnes Martin's pictures with the curvy, textile-draped femininity of Veronese's. In "Arras Suite Red," hundreds of four-picture photo strips mounted together create a Muybridge-like meditation on the movements of

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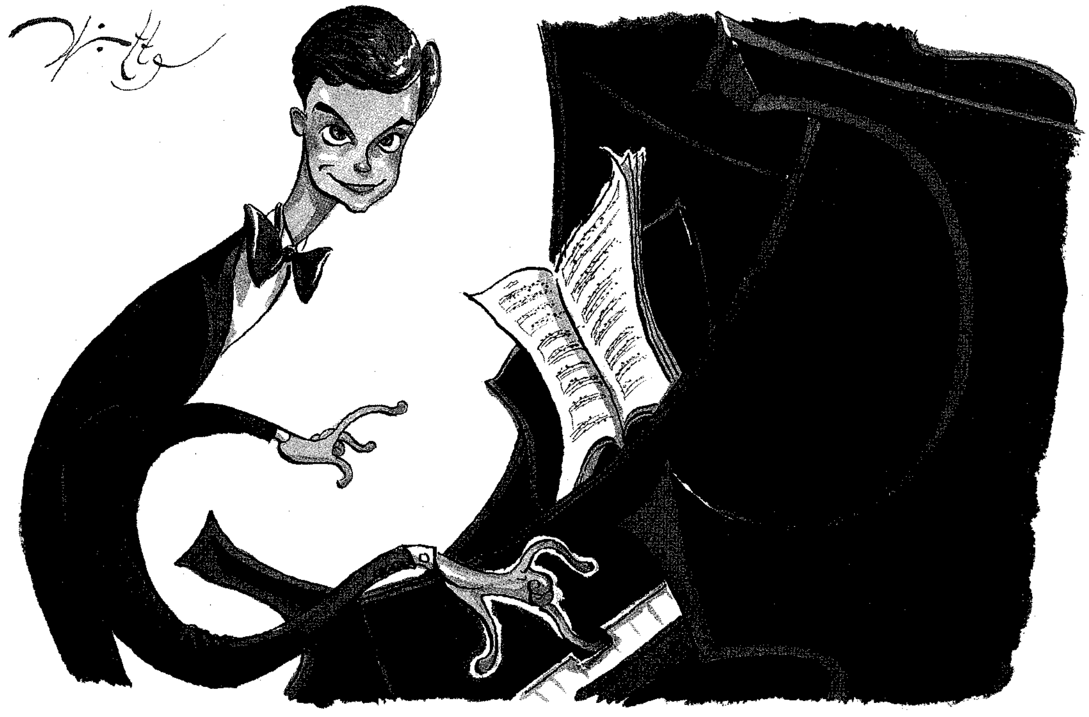
a piece of Indian silk. For "Pig's Ear," pink fabric somersaults across a black background, inanimate, but somehow loaded with playful and lyrical humanity. Through Sept. 1. (Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 243-3159.)

WILHELM VON GLOEDEN
Von Gloeden (1856-1931) was born into the Prussian nobility but moved to Taormina, Sicily, before launching his artistic career. In this warmer climate and more relaxed society, the Baron's disabling respiratory problems eased and his nervous condition (which the gallery calls "psychological distress experienced as a pederast unable to indulge his erotic fantasies") improved. The pictures on show here, taken between 1878 and 1914, are largely of nude and partially clothed young men, one in Pan's horns and not much else, others half-draped in Grecian-style togas. Most figures are identified simply as "Sicilian Youth," including the lone young woman posed as the Virgin, perhaps a companion to a better-known image not on show here: the Baron's own self-portrait as Christ. Through Sept. 9. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059.)

"AIR CONDITIONED: INTERIORS"
This show of forty-five pictures is successfully compressed into minimal space by a stronger than usual curatorial hand. Several groups of four photos similar in color, composition, and subject turn out to be pairs of works by two different artists: Peter Jones's studies of Little Compton, Rhode Island, hang in tight formation with Zeva Mandelbaum's shots of her emptied Kansas City childhood home. Both artists gain from the comparison, as do Jeff Mermelstein and Gillian Laub, whose home and family scenes are similarly arranged. The show focusses on contemporary color—there's nothing here more than sixteen years old—but it begins and ends with groups of classic, almost ancient-looking black-and-whites, making clear the connections between this generation's ecstatically lush images and the stark, simple compositions that preceded them. Through Aug. 31. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)



Pianist Till Fellner, appearing as a soloist with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall.

MICHAEL WITTE

"CAPTURE THE MOMENT"
Press photographers have been following this show's title directive for years, sometimes successfully. This selection of Pulitzer Prize-winning pictures leapfrogs bewilderingly back and forth through history—before the Vietnam War, domestic disaster figured largely, as in John Gaunt, Jr.,'s 1954 picture of a couple whose eighteen-month-old son has just drowned off the California coast. After Vietnam, images are drawn from an ever-widening spiral of war and famine, through Rhodesia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iran, and onward. The work's impact is marred somewhat by brief, often inane oral histories of the photographs, which hang with overenthusiastic descriptive captions. Perhaps the dopiest accompanies a series on the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan: "Both men intend to shoot the president. One holds a camera, the other, a gun." Through Sept. 23. (Newseum, 580 Madison Ave. 317-7503.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—"**A Durable Memento**" presents daguerreotypes of places (Connecticut, Liberia) and people (John Brown) taken by Augustus Washington, the son of a former slave. Through Sept. 24. **"Positions in the Life World"** surveys Martha Rossler's photos and videos, including such classics as her 1975 "Semiotics of the Kitchen." Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

LOUISE DAHL-WOLFE
Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.
Through Sept. 1.

"SPIAGGE"
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.
Through Sept. 9.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum.

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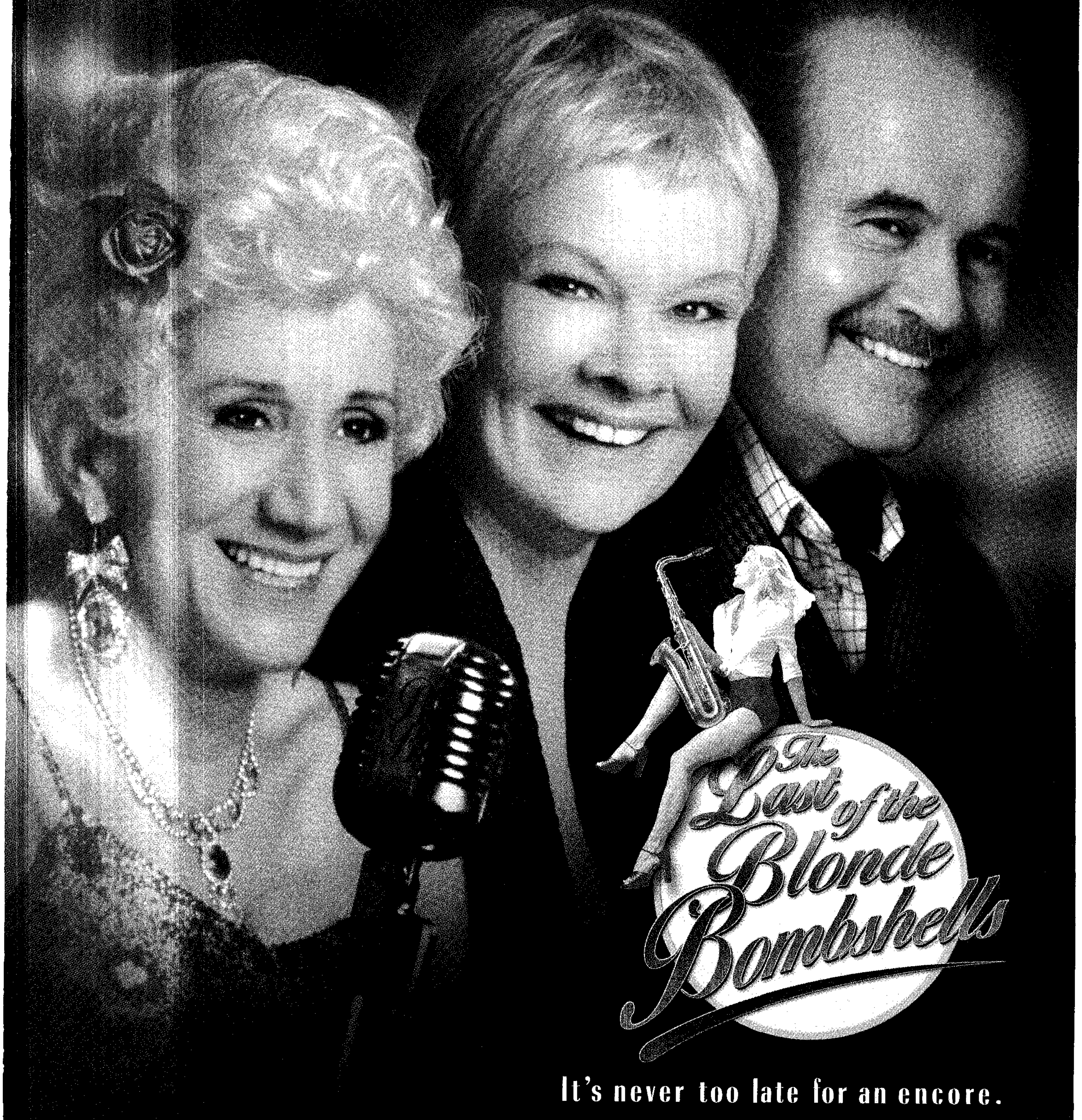
MOSTLY MOZART

ORCHESTRAS
Aug. 16 at 8: Hans Vonk conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in music by Mozart (including his Violin Concerto No. 4, with Julia Fischer), Stravinsky's Two Orchestral Suites, and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 (featuring André Watts). (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, the Whitman String Quartet performs Ravel's Quartet.) ♦ Aug. 17 at 8: I Solisti Veneti, the old-line string ensemble led by Claudio Scimone, offers one of its signature programs of concertos by Vivaldi and his contemporaries. (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 6:45 and open to ticket holders, members of the same ensemble offer more Vivaldi, plus movements from two Bach concertos.) ♦ Aug. 18-19 at 8: The Festival Orchestra plays Mozart's Symphonies No. 32 and No. 35, as well as his D-Minor Piano Concerto (with Stewart Goodyear) and Henri Vieuxtemps's Violin Concerto No. 5 (featuring Joshua Bell). Emmanuel Krivine conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both nights at 7 and open to ticket holders, Mr. Goodyear performs his own "Variations on 'Eleanor Rigby' " and Mozart's A-Major Sonata, K. 331.) ♦ Aug. 22-23 at 8: Gerard Schwarz leads the Festival Orchestra in Mendelssohn's Overture to "Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde," Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 482, with Till Fellner) and Violin Concerto in A Major (with Pamela Frank), and Bizet's effervescent Symphony in C. (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, Ms. Frank and her husband, the violinist and violist Alexander Simionescu, perform music by Mozart and others.) ♦ Aug. 25-26 at 8: It's surprising that Mozart and Weber don't appear more often as program-mates. Not only did Weber build on the simmering passion of late Mozart to create full-blown German Romanticism; they were also in-laws, since Mozart's wife, Constanze, was Weber's cousin. Here they are, together at last, closing Mostly Mozart's thirty-fourth season. On the program are vocal and instrumental excerpts from Weber's "Der Freischütz" and Mozart's C-Minor Mass. Mr. Schwarz directs the Festival Orchestra, the Riverside Choral Society, and soloists Harolyn Blackwell (soprano), Kristine Jepson (mezzo-soprano), Anthony Dean Griffey (tenor), and Peter Rose (bass). (Avery Fisher Hall.) (For information about tickets to all Mostly Mozart events, except for the free ones, call 721-6500.)

CHAMBER MUSIC
Two seasons ago, Mostly Mozart began a complete survey of Haydn's groundbreaking string quartets, programming them in a series of half-hour pre-concert recitals. That laudable incentive continues this season, as the Colorado String Quartet plays twelve more Haydn quartets, drawn from all phases of his career, and offered two or three to



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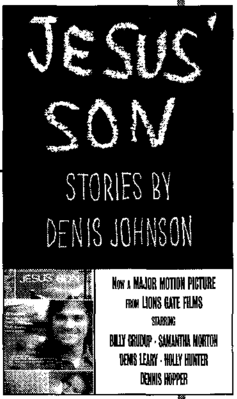
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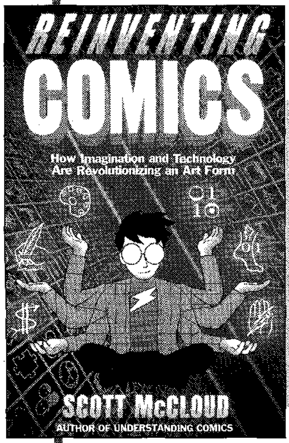
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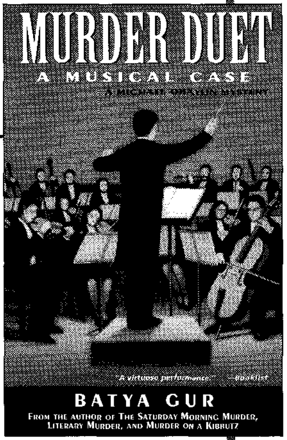
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a program. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. Aug. 18 and Aug. 21-23 at 6 and Aug. 19 at 3. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.)

BACHFEST
Aug. 20 at 5: Three weeks after the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Bach's death, the Belgian conductor Philippe Herreweghe arrives for a series of tributes to the master. Although most noted for his work in the arena of historical performance, Herreweghe made his first mark as a choral conductor, and over the past twenty-five years has founded three choirs that have achieved international acclaim, each devoted to a distinct repertoire. In this concert, he leads the first American performances of one of them, the Collegium Vocale Ghent, which specializes in Bach and other German Baroque composers. Herreweghe has a special gift for Bach, regularly turning in powerfully dramatic performances that don't sacrifice intellectual rigor. Here he directs Bach's Cantatas No. 11 (the so-called "Ascension Oratorio") and No. 105, as well as the much loved Magnificat; the vocal soloists are soprano Deborah York, contralto Andreas Scholl, tenor Werner Güra, and bass-baritone David Wilson-Johnson. (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 21 at 8: Mr. Herreweghe, the Collegium Vocale Ghent, and the four soloists continue their Bachfest with a performance of the B-Minor Mass. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 23 at 6: More Bach on period instruments—this time, the six sonatas for violin and harpsichord, played alfresco by Cynthia Roberts and James Richman. (North Plaza, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 24 at 8: The week of Bach concludes with a performance of his four Overtures (widely known as Orchestral Suites), with Philip Pickett leading the period-instrument players of the New London Consort. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets to all Mostly Mozart events, call 721-6500.)

OTHER CONCERTS

LA LUNA
This American period-instrument group, comprising two violins, viola da gamba, and harpsichord, is custom-made for exploring Baroque canzonas, fantasias, and—of course—trio sonatas. In its first New York performance, the ensemble plays virtuosic works from early-seventeenth-century Italy, by Frescobaldi, Biagio Marini, and more obscure figures. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Aug. 16 at 5:45.)

TANGLEWOOD
The final classical concerts of the season include the following highlights. Aug. 16 at 8:30: A recital by pianist Nelson Freire. ♦ Aug. 17 at 8:30: The Juilliard String Quartet offers quartets by Haydn, Bartók, and Mendelssohn. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8:30: Adam Fischer conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Kodály's "Dances of Galánta," Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. ♦ Aug. 19 at 8:30: Itzhak Perlman leads Mozart's Symphony No. 29 and Brahms's Symphony No. 4 and doubles as soloist in Beethoven's two Romances for Violin. ♦ Aug. 20 at 2:30: Federico Cortese conducts the Boston Symphony in music by Verdi, as well as in Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (featuring Mr. Freire). ♦ Aug. 22 at 8:30: Philippe Herreweghe directs the Collegium Vocale Ghent in a Bach program. ♦ Aug. 25 at 8:30: Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducts the Boston Symphony in Sibelius's Violin Concerto (featuring Joshua Bell) and Mahler's Symphony No. 1. ♦ Aug. 26 at 8:30: André Previn leads the Boston Symphony in an all-Strauss program in which soprano Felicity Lott sings the "Four Last Songs." ♦ Aug. 27 at 2:30: The Boston Symphony's last concert of the summer is given over to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with Mr. Frühbeck de Burgos conducting. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

"MAKE MINE MOZART"
Trinity Church's summer series continues with two free performances for the lunchtime crowd. Aug. 17 at 1: Flutist David Fedele and members of the Concertante Chamber Players perform Mozart's four flute quartets. ♦ Aug. 24 at 1: Mozart's

singspiel "Zaide," in a concert performance by the Westside Opera. (Broadway at Wall St. No tickets necessary.)

BARGEMUSIC
Aug. 17 at 7:30 and Aug. 20 at 4: Presenting Weber's G-Minor Flute Trio, Ravel's "Chansons Madécasses" (with baritone Chris Pedro Trakas), and Dvořák's "Dumky" Piano Trio. ♦ Aug. 18-19 at 7:30: Clarinettist Thomas Hill and pianist Randall Hodgkinson perform sonatas by Bernstein and Brahms (his First), soprano Jayne West and Mr. Hodgkinson offer seven songs by Britten, and all join for obbligato songs by Spohr. ♦ Aug. 24 at 7:30 and Aug. 27 at 4: Violinist Nai-Yuan Hu and harpist Nancy Allen play Saint-Saëns's "Fantasy for Violin and Harp" in a concert that also includes Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp and Brahms's C-Minor String Quartet. ♦ Aug. 25-26 at 7:30: French hornist William Purvis and pianist Mihae Lee perform Schumann's Romance for Horn, David Kim and Ms. Lee offer Prokofiev's D-Major Violin Sonata, and all three join forces for Brahms's Horn Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

BARD MUSIC FESTIVAL
This year's lectures, roundtables, and performances explore the life and works of Beethoven. Aug. 18 at 10 A.M. and 1:30: Discussions about revolution and the arts. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8: A talk-and-play evening of piano works, vocal music, and chamber pieces, with mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson and tenor John Aler among the performers. ♦ Aug. 19

TABLES FOR TWO

SONO
106 E. 57th St. (752-4411)—For a total escape from the dog days of August, this sleek, windowless retreat may be the coolest place in town. From the trickling water garden just inside the entrance to the harmonious earth colors of the minimally appointed dining room, everything here bespeaks tranquillity. The chef is Tadashi Ono, and, true to the tradition of Japanese self-restraint, he does not make a show of personality. But his touch is quietly omnipresent. He made most of the moss-colored ceramics on which the food is presented, and his innovative cuisine is highly individual, to say the least.

Ono, who was formerly the chef of La Caravelle, merges the collage-like approach of his native Japan with techniques of classic French cooking to create a modern culinary equivalent to the turn-of-the-century artistic vogue known as *japonisme*. Among the appetizers, chilled asparagus soup subtly heightens the play of flavors and textures between pieces of tofu, shrimp, and salmon roe; the tired old crab cake becomes a delicate thing of mystery in a bath of tomato essence and *shiso*. Among the main courses, Dover sole takes on new life as a crunchy tempura, softened by a fines-herbes bouillon. A roasted duck breast and confit of duck on a bed of steamed buckwheat with a wasabi-watercress sauce seems to have stepped out of a Japanese marsh. Perhaps the most remarkable marriage of cultures is achieved with another Gallic standby—rack of lamb, which is roasted with garlic and Provençal herbs, and which arrives in a clay shell the color of red lacquer. When the waiter cracks open the clay with a mallet, the woodsy aroma and sashimi-like texture are, like all of Ono's concoctions, gently surprising. A dessert of watermelon soup with tequila-lime sorbet, or a trio of crèmes brûlées, flavored with coconut, plum, and lemongrass, completes the feeling of being on a slow boat to somewhere else. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner, Saturdays for dinner only. Prix fixe $57, $69, or $84.)

—*Charles Michener*

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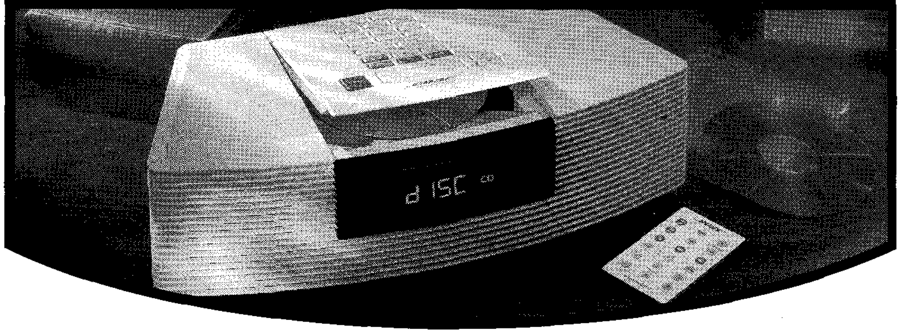

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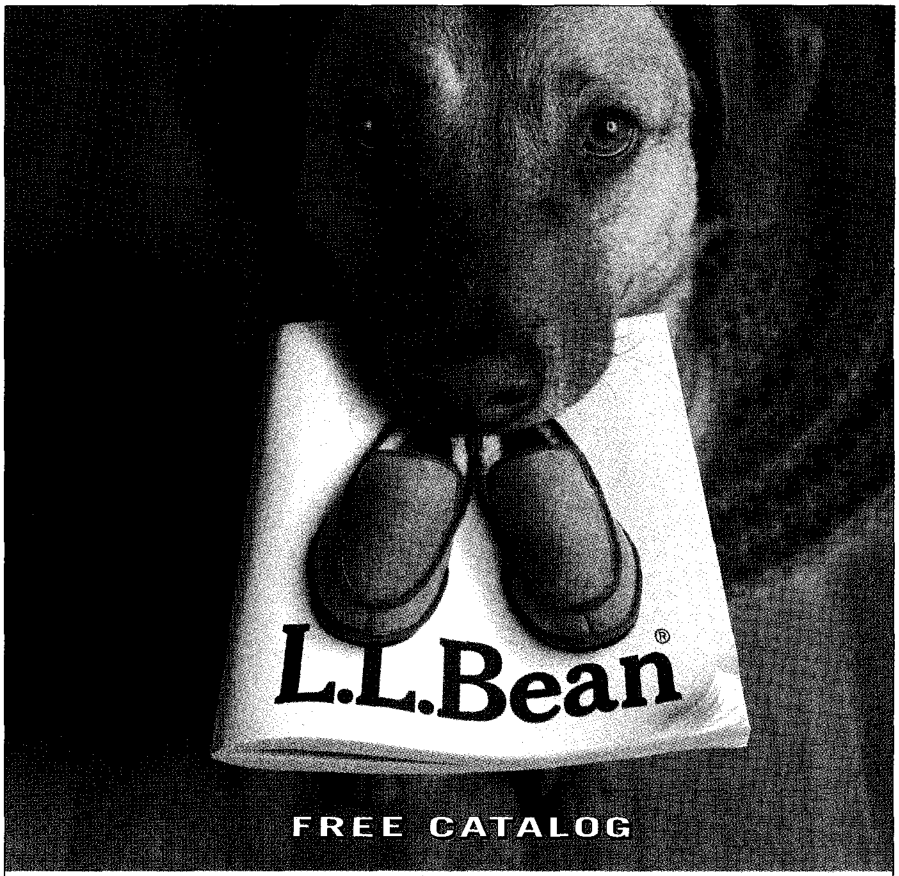

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at 10 A.M.: Performances and discussion of music by Beethoven's contemporaries, such as Cherubini and Reicha. ♦ Aug. 19 at 1:30: Pianist Charles Rosen performs Beethoven's "Diabelli" Variations, in a concert that also includes vocal and instrumental chamber pieces. ♦ Aug. 19 at 8: Leon Botstein leads the Bard Music Festival Orchestra in a concert that includes the Symphony No. 7, "Wellington's Victory," and the incidental music for Goethe's "Egmont" (with soprano Helen Donath featured in the last). ♦ Aug. 20 at 10 A.M.: The distinguished, invariably stimulating musicologists Lewis Lockwood and William Kinderman are among the participants in a roundtable on Beethoven's creative process. ♦ Aug. 20 at 1:30: This concert includes appearances by Blanca Uribe, performing the C-Minor Piano Sonata (Op. 111), and the Wihan String Quartet, playing the Quartets in E-Flat Major (Op. 127) and F Major (Op. 135). ♦ Aug. 20 at 5: Mr. Botstein, the Festival Orchestra, the New York Virtuoso Singers, and soloists (Ms. Donath, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Aler, and bass-baritone John Cheek) conclude the proceedings with a performance of the "Missa Solemnis." (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. 914-758-3226. Pre-concert lectures precede some performances.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS

Aug. 19 at 8: Lionheart, a men's a-cappella ensemble, performs chant and polyphony as it might have been heard in Paris about eight hundred years ago. ♦ Aug. 20 at 3: The Colorado String Quartet plays Shostakovich's Quartets No. 5 and No. 15, as well as Katherine Hoover's recently completed String Quartet. ♦ Aug. 26 at 8: Flutist Paula Robison and pianist Jeremy Denk team up for works by Strauss, Robert Beaser, Debussy, and others. ♦ Aug. 27 at 3: The final installment of Maverick's three-season survey of the complete Shostakovich quartets arrives as the Manhattan String Quartet plays the First, the Twelfth, and the Thirteenth. (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY

Jens Nygaard conducts a concert that includes Bellini's Oboe Concerto (featuring Gerard Reuter) and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Ilya Itin). (45 Bleecker Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. Aug. 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

AHN TRIO

The Ahn sisters—violinist Angella, cellist Maria, and pianist Lucia—are a classical-music marketer's dream: they're photogenic, young (early thirties, we'd guess, though they're cagey about their ages), and hip (they're actually based in the East Village). That they grew up playing music together feeds the fantasy that they must be genetically destined to become a mystically entwined chamber ensemble, but it remains to be seen whether any of that will translate into reality. Their recordings to date (on the EMI label) reveal competent interpretations of Dvořák and Shostakovich, but hardly more than that. Still, there's lots of time for them to grow into the classics; meanwhile, they're doing their bit for contemporary composers, several of whom—including Michael Nyman, Paul Schoenfield, Eric Ewazen, and Kenji Bunch—are represented in this concert at a laid-back venue. (Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. Aug. 23-24 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 239-6200.)

LOCRIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS

This four-year-old group's mission is to perform only pieces that are less than a decade old. Here the players offer Terry Riley's "Cinco de Mayo," Philip Glass's "Now, So Long After That Time," and works by Jahn Beukes, David Macdonald, Ken Sullivan, and ensemble members Jonathan Faiman and Emily Wong. (Christ Chapel, Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave., at 121st St. Aug. 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

If it's August, it's time for the accordionists to descend en masse on Manhattan, as they have for the past five years. Not everyone shares organizer William Schimmel's enthusiasm for the instrument, to be sure, but the gathering's combination of passion and wackiness can be a lot of fun. This year's convention unrolls under the title "One Big Happy Family! Function/Dysfunction," and its attractions include such master-class topics as "The Accordion as Fetish (Is There Room in Your Bed?)," "The Accordion as Fashion (A Fickle Solution?)," and "Worship and the Accordion (Can Your Accordion Speak in Tongues?)." Listeners content to limit their participation to public concerts may choose from three separate programs, on Aug. 25-27 at 7, which include a few brand-new works redolent of performance art. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 575 Broadway. For information, call 876-0827.)

Watching out for bats, on a guided, after-dark tour of Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

SERGIO RUZZIER

ABOVE AND BEYOND

NIGHT MOVES

Come sundown, when the rollerbladers, Frisbee tossers, and joggers in Brooklyn's Prospect Park head home for dinner, some of the park's permanent residents—its bats—stretch their wings and start looking for a meal. On Aug. 26 at 8, Paul Keim, the president of the Brooklyn Bird Club, leads a tour pointing out these misunderstood mammals in action. He'll show how they use echolocation, which is similar to sonar, to corral a group of flying insects and then snatch them up one by one. (For more information, call 718-788-8500.)

PUPPET THEATRE

Wooden dragon puppets that spout real water and breathe real fire highlight performances by the Saigon Water Puppet Theatre. (The World Financial Center Plaza. No tickets necessary. Aug. 16-18 at 7 and Aug. 19-20 at 3.)

FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL

Ten players ranked among the top twenty in the world, including current Association of Tennis Professionals leader Magnus Norman, two-time U.S. Open champion Patrick Rafter, and former French Open champion Michael Chang, compete in this year's Hamlet Cup Tennis Tournament, the last A.T.P.-sanctioned event before the U.S. Open. (Hamlet Golf & Country Club, Commack, N.Y. For more information, call 631-462-2600. Aug. 19-27.)

READINGS

Aug. 16 at 7:30: By Carol Groneman, from "Nymphomania," her history of excessive sexual desire. (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 23 at 6: By National Football League Hall of Famer Bob Griese, from his memoir, "Undefeated." (Borders, 5 World Trade Center. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 24 at 8: By poets Matthew Burgess, Gail Cooper, and Regie Cabico, from their work. (Tillie's of Brooklyn, 248 Dekalb Ave. No tickets necessary.)

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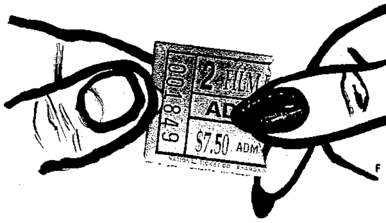


MOVIES OPENING

THE ART OF WAR
A thriller, with Wesley Snipes as a United Nations operative who is framed for the murder of a Chinese ambassador. Directed by Christian Duguay. Opening Aug. 25.

THE BALLAD OF RAMBLIN' JACK
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Aug. 16. (Film Forum.)

BITTERSWEET MOTEL
A documentary, directed by Todd Phillips, chronicling a year in the life of Phish, the twenty-first-century Grateful Dead. Opening Aug. 25. (Cinema Village.)

BRING IT ON
Kirsten Dunst and Gabrielle Union are the leaders of rival cheerleading squads, in this teen drama directed by Peyton Reed. Opening Aug. 18.

CATFISH IN BLACK BEAN SAUCE
A comedy about two Vietnamese children who are adopted by an African-American couple. With Sanaa Lathan. Opening Aug. 25.

THE CELL
A child therapist (Jennifer Lopez) uses a new drug to enter the mind of a comatose serial killer (Vincent D'Onofrio). Directed by Tarsem. Opening Aug. 18.

CLAIRE DOLAN
Lodge Kerrigan directed this realistic drama about an Irish prostitute (Katrin Cartlidge) who takes up with a New York City cabdriver (Vincent D'Onofrio). Opening Aug. 18. (The Screening Room.)

THE CREW
A comedy about four retired mobsters who stage a murder to drive away yuppies from their Florida apartment complex. With Burt Reynolds and Richard Dreyfuss. Opening Aug. 25.

FASTPITCH
A documentary about the barnstorming sport of fast-pitch softball, directed by Jeremy Taylor. Opening Aug. 25.

GOD'S ARMY
A group of young Mormon missionaries experience temptation and transcendence in Los Angeles. Written and directed by Richard Dutcher. Opening Aug. 25.

GODZILLA 2000
A Godzilla movie from Japan, directed by Takao Okawara, in which the supersized lizard does battle with an equally giant sea creature. Opening Aug. 18.

LOVE AND SEX
A romantic comedy in which a journalist (Famke Janssen) gets back together with her boyfriend (Jon Favreau) as she's writing an article on modern dating. Opening Aug. 25.

THE MOST TERRIBLE TIME IN MY LIFE
A seedy neighborhood in Yokohama is ground zero of a vicious gangland battle, in this noir shoot-'em-up directed by Kaizo Hayashi. In Japanese. Opening Aug. 25. (The Screening Room.)

ORFEU
Carlos Diegues directed this retelling of the myth of Orpheus set in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. In Portuguese. Opening Aug. 25.

THE ORIGINAL KINGS OF COMEDY
Spike Lee's documentary of the concert tour of four black comedians: Cedric the Entertainer, Steve Harvey, D. L. Hughley, and Bernie Mac. Opening Aug. 18.

PLACE VENDÔME
Love and deceit among the élite of the diamond trade, with Catherine Deneuve in a lead role. Directed by Nicole Garcia. In French. Opening Aug. 18.

RAN
A rerelease of Akira Kurosawa's 1985 film, which adapts "King Lear" to sixteenth-century Japan. In Japanese. Opening Aug. 18. (Union Square.)

SMILING FISH AND GOAT ON FIRE
A low-budget comedy about two brothers (Derick and Steven Martini, real-life siblings) and their various dating adventures. Directed by Kevin Jordan. Opening Aug. 25.

SOLOMON AND GAENOR
In Wales in 1911, an Orthodox Jewish boy (Ioan Gruffudd) and a miner's daughter (Nia Roberts) begin a star-crossed love affair. Written and directed by Paul Morrisson. Opening Aug. 25.

STEAL THIS MOVIE!
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 18.

FILM NOTES

AIMÉE & JAGUAR
It's "Julia" meets "Henry and June," with a twist: the self-mythologizing of both those films is gloriously absent in this true-life tale of two German women—one a Jew, the other the wife of a Nazi officer and the mother of four children—who meet and fall in love during the final months of the Second World War. It's the love that each has been waiting for, and it ends in a concentration camp, but the director, Max Färberböck, whose influences—Fassbinder, Sirk—show, manages to sidestep sentimentality with his brilliant casting. The lead actresses, Juliane Köhler and Maria Schrader, are smart and deft and enact one of the most erotic first couplings seen on the screen in years.—*Hilton Als* (Quad Cinema.)

ALICE AND MARTIN
The new André Téchiné picture stars Juliette Binoche as Alice, a violin player who gives nothing away—like the movie, she is close to unreadable—and yet gives all for love. Alice is the roommate of the outgoing Benjamin (Mathieu Amalric), whose quiet, younger half-brother, Martin (Alexis Loret), arrives unannounced at their apartment. Alice and Martin fall for each other, although neither looks too happy about it. In their gracefully twisted world, love can sometimes feel as damaging as the lack of it. The central affair is more like a sleepwalk than a joyride, and both parties seem to be carrying untold burdens. Like the landscapes that Téchiné photographs with such speedy rapture, this strange and nagging work is not so much a sunny romance as a vale of secrets. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 7/31/00.) (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE BALLAD OF RAMBLIN' JACK
Aiyana Elliott crafted this loving, affecting documentary of her father, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the legendary folksinger who was both a disciple of Woody Guthrie and a mentor to Bob Dylan (who later denied Jack's influence). The son of a Jewish doctor from Brooklyn, Ramblin' Jack refashioned himself as a folksinger, and, after his early success as part of the Washington Square folk revival, he spent decades singing songs of lumberjacks, cotton pickers, and cowboys until his 1995 album "South Coast" brought him belated recognition. Father and daughter travel the United States visiting old friends, like Kris Kristofferson and Arlo Guthrie, and throughout Jack sustains a wistful, funny monologue that imparts his own peculiar brand of wisdom: "My advice to young people today: learn how to whittle." He's a master storyteller, and it's easy to get caught up in the spell of his words and miss the film's sad core: a daughter's search for her unknown father.—*Michael Agger* (Film Forum.)

BENJAMIN SMOKE
This documentary, a requiem for the singer-songwriter Benjamin (a.k.a. Robert Dickerson) of the band Smoke, has the funereal gloom of a great Lou Reed record. The filmmakers, Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen, weave Benjamin's story—his impoverished life in Cabbagetown (a former mill town that's now part of Atlanta), his Southern drag-queen demeanor, his pill-popping, his struggle with AIDS—into a ragged tapestry of a talented life in extreme situations. Benjamin's face is a junkie rock star's dream (it has shades of Mick Jagger, David Johansen, and Steven Tyler), and his vocal delivery echoes Tom Waits and John Cale. What the directors get exactly right are the details of Benjamin's world: the damaged photographs, the graying shingled houses, and the cut and bruised townspeople. It's no surprise when Patti Smith shows up at the end of the film with a poem she's written for him.—*Bruce Diones* (The Screening Room.)

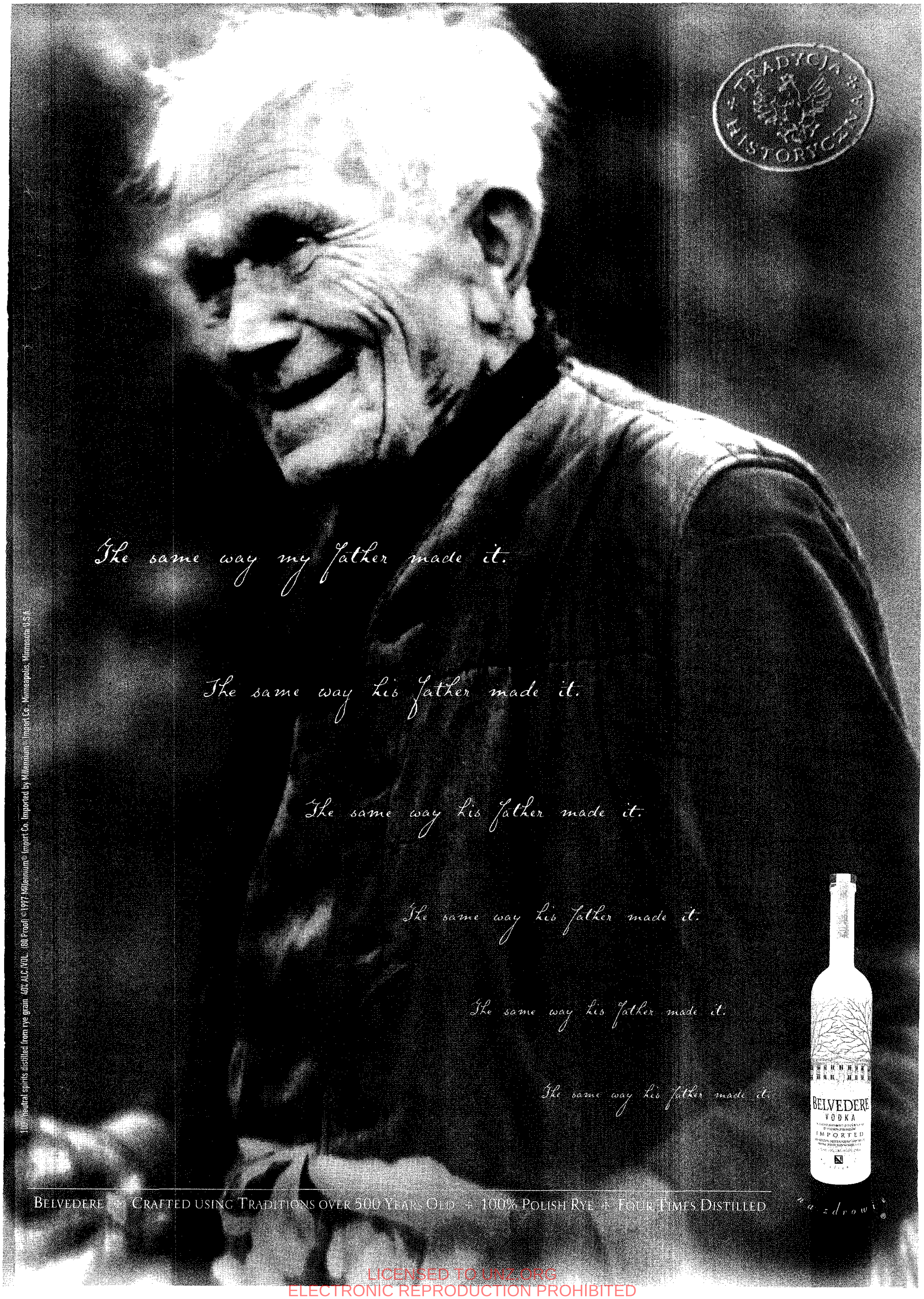
CECIL B. DEMENTED
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center.)

COYOTE UGLY
Cynical Hollywood moviemaking at its worst. The latest mess produced by the overblown hand of Jerry Bruckheimer ("Gone in 60 Seconds," "Con Air") concerns a Jersey songwriter (Piper Perabo) waiting for her big break while working in a loud, razzle-dazzle nightspot full of dancing bartenders and drunken patrons. Maria Bello, Tyra Banks, Izabella Miko, and Adam Garcia stomp the bar to pieces in choreographed mayhem, but there isn't a shred of a story to hang their characters on. The film, directed shamelessly by David McNally, is so haltingly edited that body parts seem to be flung at the camera; it's a whirling dervish of butts and breasts which makes "Flashdance" seem the height of understatement.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Ave., East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, and Union Square.)

FANNY AND ALEXANDER
Ingmar Bergman's festive and full-bodied dream play—a vision of family life as a gifted boy might have perfected it, replacing his strict family (Bergman's father was a clergyman) with a generous-hearted theatrical clan. The movie is scaled big; it runs for three hours and ten minutes, and its lovingly placed, warm gingerbread is enormously enjoyable. But the conventionality of the thinking in the film is rather shocking. It's as if Bergman's neuroses had been tormenting him for so long that he cut them off and went sprinting back to Victorian health and domesticity. Cinematography by Sven Nykvist. In Swedish. Released in 1983.—*Pauline Kael* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Aug. 20.)

GIRL ON THE BRIDGE
A waifish young woman (Vanessa Paradis) attempts to drown herself but is saved by a knife thrower (Daniel Auteuil) who persuades her to join his act, where she becomes both nerveless victim and indispensable muse. He whirls her from one fancy location to the next, living on the slim proceeds of their success and gazing with avuncular disdain upon her incessant amours. The movie promises to be as steely as the flying blades, and the knife-tossing sequences make you flinch; but the director, Patrice Leconte, seems unable to match the coolness of his heroine, and the story droops into whimsy. Still, here is your chance to study the phenomenon that is Ms. Paradis—a huge draw in France and the beloved of Johnny Depp, who sports a similar set of cheekbones. In French.—*A.L.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

HOLLOW MAN
A cocky scientist named Sebastian Caine (Kevin Bacon) injects serum into his veins and becomes invisible. Does Sebastian do something cool with his new freedom, like turn losers into winners at Donald Trump's casino tables or perform mysterious good deeds and then disappear? No such luck. The director Paul Verhoeven is more literal-minded and crass: Sebastian fondles and rapes women and becomes increasingly violent, eventually stalking his colleagues (including Elisabeth Shue and Josh Brolin) in a vast underground lab. The movie has some extraordinary digital effects (when Sebastian is underwater he can just barely be seen—he looks like a well-toned jellyfish, shapely and translucent), but the plotting and dialogue function at the level of a third-rate thriller. An exhaustingly bad movie devoted to an idea that could have been great fun.—*David Denby* (8/14/00) (84th Street Sixplex,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Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

INTERN

Dominique Swain acquired a dollop of notoriety for her 1997 portrayal of Lolita, and she returns here as a bright-eyed intern at a fashion magazine, which seems a likely landing place for an ex-nymphet. The film begins as a farce but turns into a Cinderella story when she falls for the lone straight guy in the art department, who just happens to be related to English royalty. The screenwriters, Jill Kopelman and Caroline Doyle, earned their insights in the fashion-mag trenches, but it's difficult to satirize a moving target: the editor who gag-vomits after sipping a latte made with two-per-cent milk is definitely last year's model. Cameos by André Leon Talley, Tommy Hilfiger, Cynthia Rowley, and other fashion luminaries (all playing themselves) underscore the basic problem: fashion people already move through their lives as though they are on film, so there's little point in exaggerating them.—*M.A.* (The Screening Room.)

MISTER HULOT'S HOLIDAY

People are at their most desperate when they are working at enjoying themselves; it is Jacques Tati's peculiar comic triumph to have caught the ghastliness of a summer vacation at the beach. Fortunately, his technique is light and dry slapstick; the chronicle of human foibles and frustrations never sinks to the moist or the lovable. As director, co-author, and star, Tati is sparse, eccentric, quick. It is not until afterward—with the sweet, nostalgic music lingering—that these misadventures take on a certain depth and poignancy. In French. Released in 1953.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Aug. 21.)

NUTTY PROFESSOR II: THE KLUMPS

It's hard to imagine a comedy any broader than "The Nutty Professor," but somehow Eddie Murphy manages to expand the waistline a few more inches with this crass and corpulent sequel. He plays six roles, including the affable Sherman Klump and various other members of the Klump clan. The only character to be demoted is Sherman's alter ego, Buddy Love, who was such a diabolical presence in the first movie. This time around, Murphy is no longer lampooning his own smooth reputation but simply staging a one-man parade of appetite and effluence. Janet Jackson is the co-star, Peter Segal the director, and gene-splicing the topical plot hook, but none of them impinge on the unstoppable Murphy routine. For most moviegoers, all this will look like a giant backward step, but no doubt the joke is on us.—*A.L.* (8/7/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

PSYCHO BEACH PARTY

The Ridiculous Theatre legend Charles Busch's ribald stage spoof of surfing films and psycho thrillers is given a decent pop incarnation on the silver screen by director Robert Lee King. A pouting misfit named Chicklet (Lauren Ambrose) becomes the main suspect in a series of beach murders, and she and the rest of the cast of studly, open-shirted men (Thomas Gibson, Nicholas Brendon) do a nice job with Busch's deliberately dumb dialogue, which is replete with double entendres, pointed puns, and audience groaners. Busch himself (who played Chicklet in the play) is hilarious as police captain Monica Stark, but much of this comedy works better onstage, where the frantic, desperate need to squeeze a laugh out of a live audience can inspire a cast to more outrageous heights.—*B.D.* (Quad Cinema and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE REPLACEMENTS

N.F.L. commentator John Madden has the best lines in this sports comedy, directed by Howard Deutch, which isn't so much a movie as a series of sports bloopers set to music, plus lots of dreamy closeups. As the man picked to mold a group of scab players during a strike, Gene Hackman reaches into his acting closet and pulls out his coach's suit, but even he can't suppress a smirk at the weightless dialogue he's obliged to deliver. Keanu Reeves plays quarterback, and he and his motley crew of teammates are funny in all the generic ways. It's a lot like one of those football games at the end of the season—enjoyable

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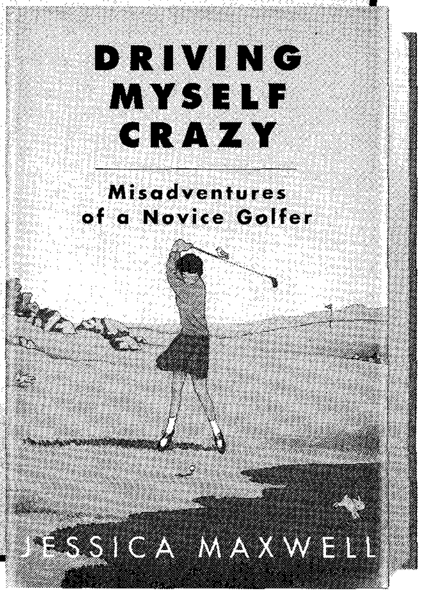

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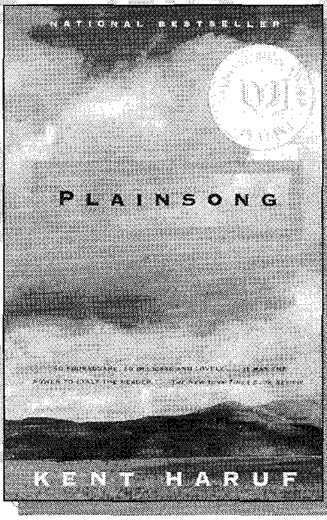

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but meaningless.—*M.A.* (East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

SPACE COWBOYS

Clint Eastwood builds a full-scale space-adventure movie around a gimmick. Four aging mavericks (Eastwood, James Garner, Donald Sutherland, and Tommy Lee Jones), Air Force hot shots from the fifties who never made it to outer space, get called into service by NASA on a special mission. It might have been a more graceful movie if Eastwood and the screenwriters, Ken Kaufman and Howard Klausner, had not joked about the men's age in every scene (James Garner is the only one who actually looks his age). Some of the hostility the men encounter (from young astronauts, for instance) is entirely unconvincing, and Eastwood's direction is a little creaky. But there are plenty of affecting and engagingly sentimental moments, many courtesy of Jones. As a widower still in love with his wife, he creeps up on the audience's emotions in his peculiarly offhand way and steals the show. With James Cromwell, William Devane, and Marcia Gay Harden.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

THE TAO OF STEVE

Jenniphr Goodman's comedy was a hit at the Sundance Film Festival, which seems to be softening its hard indie edge in favor of gentle crowd-pleasers. The film is set in Santa Fe, which comes across as the capital city of slackerdom; apparently entire lives can be structured around the art of the Frisbee. Donal Logue plays Dex, the portly and lovable hero, as a kind of threatless John Belushi—no one is wary of him or his bulk, and women, in particular, are drawn to his bed in spite of themselves. Dex has a book-fed philosophy of successful seduction, although the movie never really shows us his technique in action. Instead, we get melting hearts as he discovers that the cool-spirited Syd (Greer Goodman) may just be the woman for him. The story strolls along with ease, picking its way carefully between the nerdish and the hip, and the soundtrack is a memorable breeze, yet you come out feeling strangely underwhelmed. When did the movies last produce a proper Casanova, with the courage of his addiction?—*A.L.* (8/7/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

WHAT LIES BENEATH

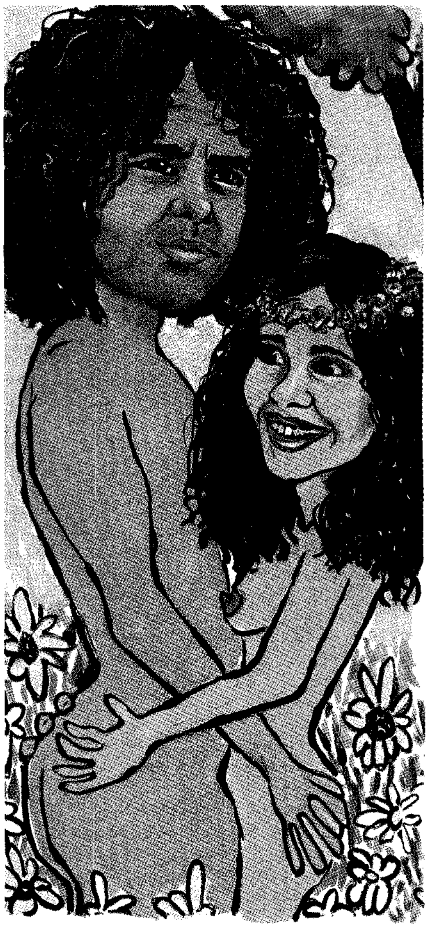
A bag of reliable old tricks. In a beautiful lakeside house in Vermont, Michelle Pfeiffer quivers in terror as an insistent ghost plays tricks on her—opening doors, knocking over pictures, squirting toothpaste into her coffee. Robert Zemeckis, the director, even resorts to horror-movie standbys such as having a menacing person suddenly appear in the frame as Pfeiffer scans her surroundings with a pair of binoculars. The cinematography, by Don Burgess, is chastely beautiful, but the music, by Alan Silvestri, tears into your emotions with the violence of a rusty blade wielded by a maniac. Most of screenwriter Clark Gregg's dialogue is banal, and Harrison Ford, as Pfeiffer's husband, scowls in selfish indifference to her problems. The picture is effectively scary, at times unpleasantly so, but only in the last forty minutes—especially during a sequence in a bathtub—does it rise above cliché.—*D.D.* (Astor Plaza, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE WIND WILL CARRY US

A beautiful but limited exercise in aesthetic formalism from the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. An engineer from Teheran (Behzad Dourani) arrives in a small mountain village in order to record some sort of ritual that depends on the death of an old lady. But the old woman, whom we never see, refuses to die, and the engineer waits and waits and begins to question his life. He becomes friends with a little boy, and converses with a variety of people in town, some of whom are also out of sight. He drives again and again to a hilltop to get a clear signal for his cell phone so he can call Teheran and make small talk. The picture has a mournful, slow rhythm, rather like that of prayer or a stately ballad, and clearly Kiarostami is saying something about the value of putting down roots versus modern restlessness. But when life is simplified this way and then arranged into a pattern, it yields meaning without much struggle. However handsome the movie, one may feel the game has been rigged. In Farsi.—*D.D.* (8/14/00) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

WONDERLAND

A searching, scruffy picture from the prolific Michael Winterbottom, who races through styles and milieus like a kid in a toy store. This latest venture is a coarse-grained record of London life, spliced between three sisters. There is Debbie (Shirley Henderson), the horny hairdresser; Nadia (Gina McKee), the lonely café waitress; and Molly (Molly Parker), who is carrying her first child plus the added burden of a panicky husband. We dart back and forth between their exploits and disappointments, with sidelong glances at their hopeless choice of men and their miserable parents. The mother is played by Kika Markham, who was a ravishing Truffaut heroine almost thirty years ago, and her presence only heightens the strain of sadness. There is an unaccountable thinness to the movie, and you wouldn't be crushed if you were told to watch it on television; on the other hand, you badly want to know what happens to these flawed and dreamy folk.—*A.L.* (7/31/00) (Eastside Playhouse and Village East Cinemas.)



Vincent D'Onofrio and Janeane Garofalo in "Steal This Movie!"

ROBERT MELEE

X-MEN

The most beautiful, strange, and exciting comic-book movie since the original "Batman." The world, it seems, is filled with mutants—quirks of evolution and lost souls who band together for comfort and understanding. Feared by the regular humans, the mutants, according to Magneto (Sir Ian McKellen), will never be accepted, and since they are superior he believes they should either destroy the rest of humanity or supplant it. He's been engaged in a long quarrel about this with Professor Xavier (Patrick Stewart), a soft-spoken, wheelchair-bound sage with empathic powers. The film combines the fear of aliens invading us (an old sci-fi trope) with a spectacular war of the gods. The director, Bryan Singer, builds the characters and then lets the action flow from their special physical skills. With Hugh Jackman as the anguished warrior Wolverine; Anna Paquin as Rogue, a teen-ager who tries to make out with her nonmutant boyfriend and winds up putting him in a coma; and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos as Mystique, who can morph into anything, but whose preferred form seems to be a stunning nude blue silicone torso.—*D.D.* (7/24/00) (Chelsea West, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

ALSO PLAYING

BLESS THE CHILD
Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.
CHUCK & BUCK (7/24/00)
Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.
CROUPIER
BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and The Screening Room.
GIMME SHELTER
Film Forum.
JESUS' SON
State and Union Square.
THE PATRIOT (7/3/00)
Empire 25, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.
THE PERFECT STORM (7/10/00)
First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.
SUNSHINE (7/17/00)
Empire 25, First & 62nd, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.
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Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
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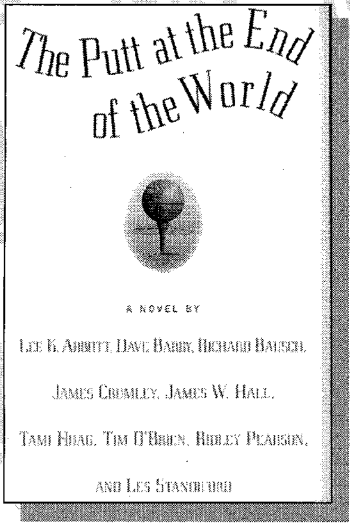

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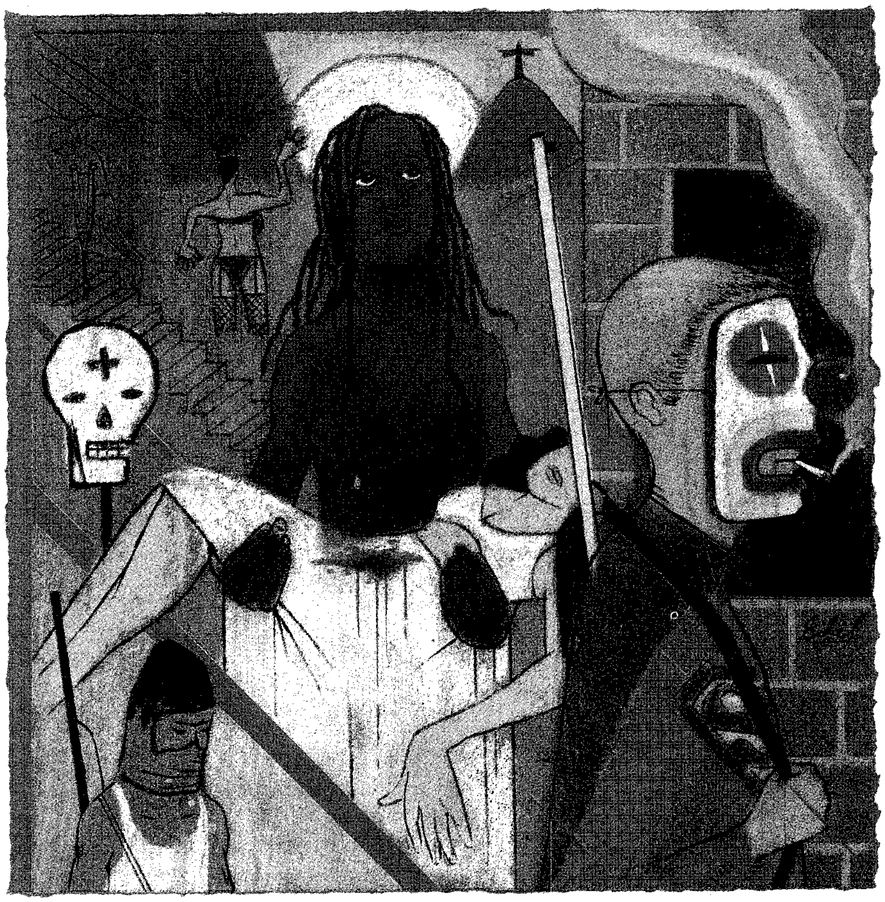

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Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
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The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
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64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
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State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
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Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Sept. 3: "Behind the Mirror: American Film in the Fifties." Aug. 19 at 2: "Bad Day at Black Rock" (1954, John Sturges). ♦ Aug. 19 at 4:30: "Point of Order" (1964, Emile De Antonio). ♦ Aug. 20 at 2: "Blackboard Jungle" (1955, Richard Brooks). ♦ Aug. 20 at 4: "I Was a Teenage Werewolf" (1957, Gene Fowler, Jr.). ♦ Aug. 26 at 1:30: "The Man with the Golden Arm" (1959, Otto Preminger). ♦ Aug. 26 at 4: "Anatomy of a Murder" (1959, Preminger). ♦ Aug. 27 at 2: "A Face in the Crowd" (1957, Elia Kazan). ♦ Aug. 27 at 4:30: "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" (1957, Frank Tashlin). ♦ Classic movies. Aug. 19-20 at 6:30: "Les Bonnes Femmes" (1960, Claude Chabrol; in French). ♦ Aug. 26-27 at 6:30: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Aug. 17-19: "The Birth of a Nation" (1915, D. W. Griffith). ♦ Aug. 20 at 6: "In Search of the American Heartland," recent 8-mm. films by Chester Swavel.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Aug. 16 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Front" (1976, Martin Ritt). ♦ Aug. 17 at 4:30 and 9:30 and Aug. 18 at 7: "Innocence Unprotected" (1968, Dusan Makavejev; in Serbian). ♦ Aug. 17 at 7 and Aug. 18 at 4:30 and 9:30: "WR: Mysteries of the Organism" (1971, Makavejev). ♦ Aug. 19 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "A Better Tomorrow" (1986, John Woo; in Cantonese). ♦ Aug. 20 at 3 and 7: "Fanny and Alexander" (†). ♦ Aug. 21 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Velvet Goldmine" (1998, Todd Haynes). ♦ Aug. 22 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Ashes and Diamonds" (1958, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish). ♦ Aug. 24 at 4:30 and 9:30 and Aug. 25 at 7: "Montenegro" (1981, Makavejev). ♦ Aug. 24 at 7 and Aug. 25 at 4:30 and 9:30: "Sweet Movie" (1974, Makavejev). ♦ Aug. 26 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "A Better Tomorrow II" (1987, Woo; in Cantonese). ♦ Aug. 27 at 2, 5, and 8: "The Sacrifice" (1986, Andrei Tarkovsky). ♦ Aug. 28 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Cruel Story of Youth" (1960, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 29 at 4:30 and 7:30: "Cotton Mary" (1999, Ismail Merchant).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. (521-5700)—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing. Aug. 21: "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Sept. 14: "The Golden Age of Foreign Film." Aug. 16: "Tokyo Story" (1953, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese) and "Ugetsu" (1953, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 17: "Children of

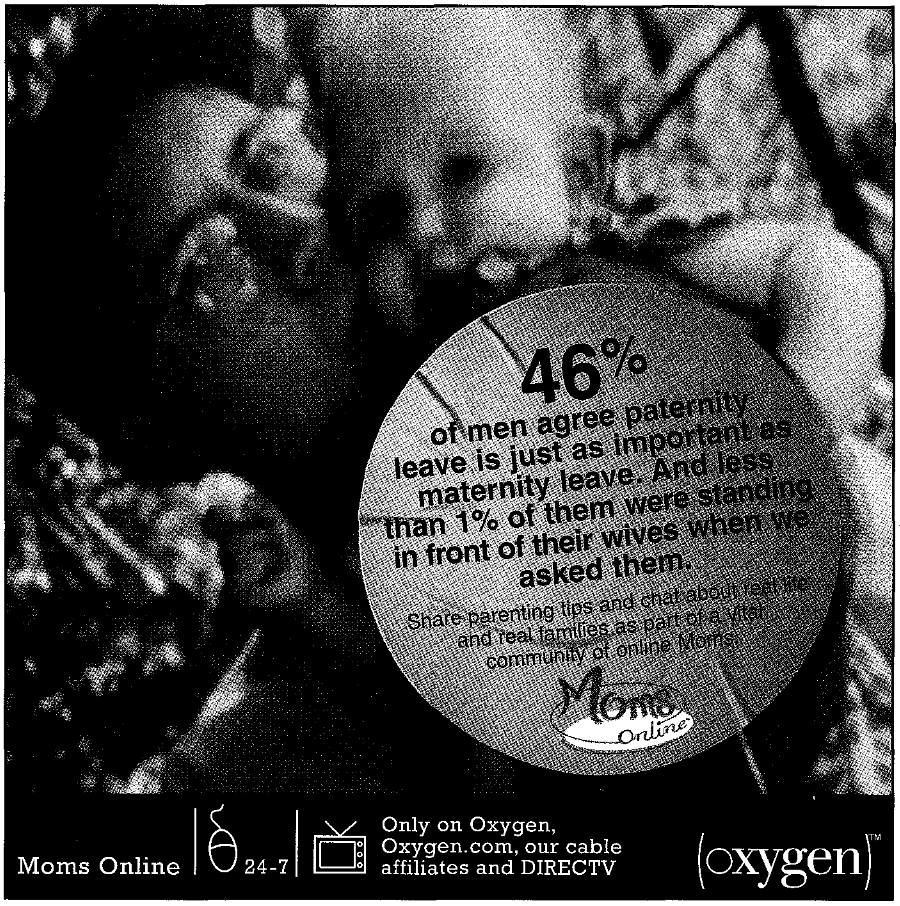
Paradise" (1945, Marcel Carné; in French). ♦ Aug. 18-19: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French) and "Contempt" (1963, Godard; in French). ♦ Aug. 20: "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964, Jacques Demy; in French) and "Viva Maria!" (1965, Louis Malle; in French). ♦ Aug. 21: "Mister Hulot's Holiday" (†) and "Mon Oncle" (1958, Jacques Tati; in French). ♦ Aug. 22: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French) and "Eyes Without a Face" (1959, Georges Franju; in French). ♦ Aug. 23: "L'Avventura" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian) and "Red Desert" (1964, Antonioni; in Italian). ♦ Aug. 24: "Rashomon" (1950, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese) and "Yojimbo" (1961, Kurosawa; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 25-26: "The Bicycle Thief" (1947, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian) and "Umberto D." (1952, De Sica; in Italian). ♦ Aug. 27: "Pather Panchali" (1955, Satyajit Ray; in Bengali) and "Aparajito" (1956, Ray; in Bengali). ♦ Aug. 28: "Diary of a Country Priest" (1950, Robert Bresson; in French) and "A Man Escaped" (1956, Bresson; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Aug. 17 at 2:30 and Aug. 18 at 6: "The Red Shoes" (1948, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger). ♦ Aug. 17 at 6 and Aug. 19 at 5: "Black Narcissus" (1947, Powell and Pressburger). ♦ Aug. 18 at 2:30: "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp" (1943, Powell and Pressburger). ♦ Aug. 18 at 7, Aug. 19 at 2: "My Neighbors the Yamadas" (1999, Isao Takahata; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 18 at 8:15, Aug. 19 at 2: "Leave Her to Heaven" (1946, John Stahl). ♦ Aug. 19 at 5: "The Virgin Spring" (1959, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Aug. 20 at 2 and Aug. 21 at 6: "The Small Back Room" (1949, Powell). ♦ Aug. 20 at 5 and Aug. 21 at 2:30: "The Big Sleep" (1946, Howard Hawks). ♦ Aug. 22 at 2:30 and Aug. 27 at 5: "Notorious" (1946, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Aug. 22 at 6:30 and Aug. 25 at 2:30: "The Last Stop" (1948, Wanda Jakubowska; in Polish). ♦ Aug. 24 at 1:30 and Aug. 26 at 4:30: "The Best Years of Our Lives" (1946, William Wyler). ♦ Aug. 24 at 6 and Aug. 28 at 2:30: "Monsieur Verdoux" (1947, Charles Chaplin). ♦ Aug. 25 at 6 and Aug. 27 at 2: "Three Strange Loves" (1949, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Aug. 25 at 7: "Something Strong Within" (1994, Robert A. Nakamura). ♦ Aug. 25 at 8 and Aug. 26 at 2: "Utamaro and His Five Women" (1946, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 26 at 5: "Victim" (1961, Basil Dearden). ♦ Aug. 28 at 6: "The Storm Within" (1948, Jean Cocteau; in French).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 24: A Tenth Anniversary Tribute to Milestone Film & Video. Aug. 16 at 1:30 and 6:15: "Chac: The Rain God" (1974, Roland Klein; in Spanish). ♦ Aug. 16 at 3:30 and 8:15: "I Am Cuba" (1964, Mikhail Kalatozov; in Spanish and Russian). ♦ Aug. 17 at 2 and 6:15: "Wuthering Heights" (1953, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish). ♦ Aug. 17 at 4 and 8:10 and Aug. 24 at 3:45: "Maborosi" (1995, Hirokazu Kore-eda; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 18 at 8:30 and Aug. 24 at 1 and 9: "Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?" (1989, Bae Yong-Kyan; in Korean). ♦ Aug. 19 at 6 and Aug. 21 at 1 and 8:30: "Pastor Hall" (1940, Roy Boulting). ♦ Aug. 19 at 8: "The Bat Whispers" (1930, Roland West). ♦ Aug. 19 at 9:45 and Aug. 20 at 1: "Antonio Gaudí" (1985, Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 20 at 4:30: "Amarilly of Clothesline Alley" (1918, Marshall Neilan). ♦ Aug. 20 at 7: "Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life" (1925, Merian Cooper, Ernest Schoedsack, and Margaret Harrison). ♦ Aug. 22 at 1 and 8:30 and Aug. 24 at 6:30: "Woman Without Love" (1951, Buñuel; in Spanish). ♦ Aug. 23 at 1 and 8:30: "Tabu" (1929-31, F. W. Murnau and Robert Flaherty). ♦ Through Sept. 6: The Cinema of Valerio Zurlini. All films are in Italian. Aug. 25 at 1, 5:15, and 9:15, Aug. 26 at 3:30, and Aug. 27 at 1:15 and 8: "The Girls of Sanfrediano" (1954). ♦ Aug. 25 at 3 and 7:15, Aug. 26 at 1:15, and Aug. 27 at 5:45: "Violent Summer" (1959). ♦ Aug. 26 at 5:30: "Family Diary" (1962). ♦ Aug. 26 at 8 and Aug. 27 at 3:15: "The Girl with the Suitcase" (1961).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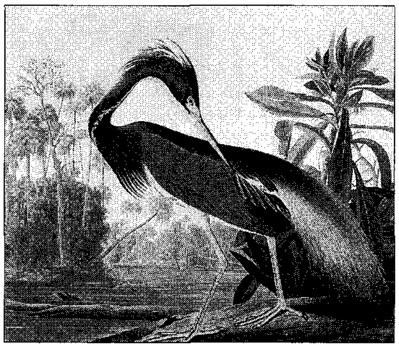

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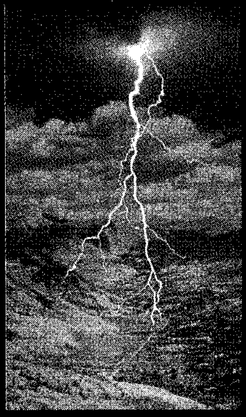

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THE NEW YORKER

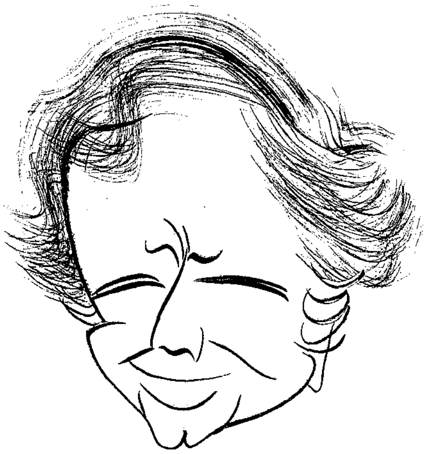
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
AIR FORCE TWO SETS OF DISHES

As the leaders and activists of the Democratic Party streamed into Los Angeles over the weekend, they were, most of them, nearly woozy with joy. Few pleasures in life can compare with the remission of pain, and the happiness in the Democrats' encampment owed much to the misery that had immediately preceded it. The Republican National Convention, despite the ridicule heaped upon it as it unfolded, was a work of political art. That became clear about halfway through George W. Bush's acceptance speech. Its language was simple and fresh. Its attacks were wisely couched as humor, and its riff on Al Gore's most irritating focus-group-tested rhetorical tic was deft: "If my opponent had been at the moon launch, it would have been a 'risky rocket scheme.' " Its allusions—from F.D.R.'s "fear itself" to Ronald Reagan's "tear down this wall"—were skillful. Its appropriation of "We Shall Overcome" was audacious but acceptable: now that the iconography of the civil-rights movement is part of America's civic religion, you don't have to earn the right to use it. Essentially, Bush *fils* took the "kinder, gentler" notion that his father had spoken of on the same occasion twelve years before, fleshed it out into three dimensions, and made it his own in a way that Bush *père* never quite managed. After the balloon drop in Philadelphia, the Republican ticket's lead in the polls climbed to nearly twenty points. Democrats found themselves suspecting that their candidate's only hope might lie with a scorched-earth negative campaign, a prospect that few of them relished. Four days later, along came Lieberman.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

The selection of Lieberman—the junior senator from Connecticut, whose Christian name, as his Louisiana colleague John Breaux might put it, is Joseph—was like a MIRVed missile with each warhead aimed right at some real or imputed weakness of Gore's (hypercautious, not a leader, scandal-tarred, "weak" on defense, "too liberal") or strength of Bush's (clean, ostentatiously religious, running mate has "gravitas"). Bush offered a hologram of inclusiveness; Gore countered with the real thing. Bush talked of Judeo-Christian values; Gore heads a Judeo-Christian ticket. The choice has even gone some distance toward transforming the political meaning of Los Angeles from celluloid Babylon into the sacralized site of the Democrats' last experiment in nominating a member of a religious minority—John F. Kennedy, in 1960.


Joseph Lieberman

Lieberman is not only Jewish; he is what Grammy Hall called a real Jew. Back in 1964, Harry Golden, the matzo-barrel humorist, joked (apropos of Barry Goldwater) that he always knew the first Jewish President would be an Episcopalian. The rest of us had generally assumed that the first Jew in the White House (in this case, the West Wing) would be, along with most American Jews, Reform, Conservative, or simply secular—and that he would look more like Gregory Peck than Mel Brooks. Lieberman is Orthodox, albeit modern Orthodox. He goes to shul, observes the Sabbath, and keeps kosher. The consensus among the punditocracy seems to be that public sentiment has evolved in directions—away from outright bigotry, yet toward receptivity to overt expressions of religious fervor—that might actually make Lieberman's Orthodoxy a political advantage. In any case, at a time of rampant workaholism one doesn't have to share Lieberman's piety to welcome the prospect of a Vice-President who actually takes a whole day off every week. Lieberman won't be giving any speeches on Saturdays in key media markets, but the public will be reminded that he's doing something arguably more important. (The liturgy may be Jewish, but the campaigning will be Zen.) And, while inclusiveness is not yet so inclusive as to include the possibility of a professed atheist or agnostic on a national ticket, Lieberman's religiosity is unthreatening to the unchurched, the unsynagogued, and the unmosqued. Judaism doesn't proselytize, and Orthodox Judaism is harder to get into than Yale.

Yet there is still such a thing as anti-Semitism, and that is why Gore's choice was courageous—a risky tolerance scheme, you might say. The Anti-Defamation League estimates that twelve per cent of the American public harbors anti-Semitic prejudice. Even if that figure is discounted by half, the anti-Jewish vote is still triple the Jewish vote. Gore is betting that Senator Breaux was right when he touchingly suggested, in words that achieved instant immortality, that Lieberman's Jewishness won't hurt his party because "people don't care so much where he goes to church on Sunday, but just that he has the moral values and principles to lead this country." With a little editing, that's an honorable wager.

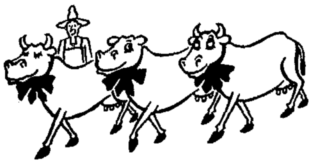
Lieberman has sometimes seemed self-righteous, and never more so than when he took the Senate floor to deliver the chastisement of Clinton that made him a national figure (and has now put him on a national ticket). There were those who thought that a detailed critique of another man's private life was unseemly coming from someone who had divorced his wife when their daughter and son were at the vulnerable ages of twelve and thirteen respectively. Nevertheless, Lieberman is close to Clinton, personally and politically. The Senator's right-wing apostasies—on school vouchers, for example—are small compared with his agreement with Clinton and Gore on taxes, the environment, abortion rights, and guns.

Both Bush and Dick Cheney, in their acceptance speeches, implicitly recognized that times are good. They could hardly do otherwise; whatever the reason, the past eight years have seen the realization of an old liberal dream, a full-employment peacetime economy. Their strategy has been to suggest that only a Republican victory can "restore" "honor and decency" to the White House. Lieberman's selection has put a crimp in that strategy, and it has also made it easier for the Democrats to full-throatedly embrace the political accomplishments of the Clinton years. We now face, of all things, the distinct possibility of a campaign fought on "the issues," that holy grail of the high-minded. Where it will all end, knows G-d.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

THE ARTISTIC LIFE

KIDNAPPED? A PAINTED COW GOES MISSING



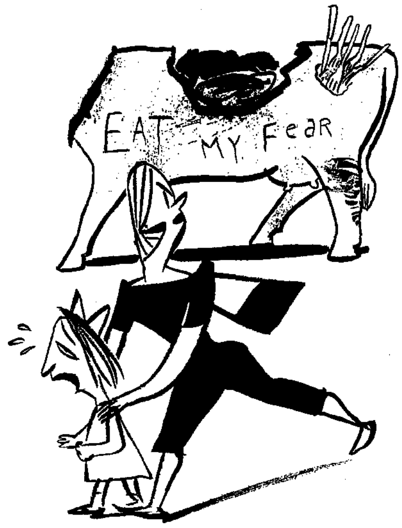
On August 2nd, the main official business of Parks Commissioner Henry Stern was taking a peek at the filmmaker David Lynch's painted cow. That morning, Stern walked through the "cow corral," a loft space on the ground floor of the Helmsley Building which serves as the headquarters of CowParade, the name for the five hundred head of corporate-sponsored and artist-decorated fibreglass cattle that are scattered around the city this summer. Stern slalomed through the sixty whimsical cows on display, cows like "American Flower Cow" and "Herd on the Avenue." He bypassed mothers bent over strollers—"Say moo!"—and headed for a walk-in safe in one corner of the room. As he moved past a white chain and entered the dark safe, he made out a vague shape, shrouded in four moving-van blankets. It was Lynch's cow, which is titled "Eat My Fear."

"It took a while for my pupils to dilate in the safe," Stern said. "The first thing I could see of Lynch's cow was the forks and knives stuck in its butt—the unappetizing rear view. Then I saw the back, all torn open, and the cow's head, rammed into its midsection, and the blood and entrails and gore." To the three standard cow poses—standing cow, grazing cow, and reclining cow—Lynch had added a fourth: beheaded, disembowelled cow. "I thought, I don't want my kids to see this!" Stern said.

When Lynch, the director of "Blue Velvet" and "Eraserhead," was asked to contribute to CowParade, he decided to make a serious statement about food and death. "I'm not a vegetarian—I had a burger last night—but I know where meat comes from," he said last week from Los Angeles. "One can imagine that the cow experiences tremendous fear in line at the slaughterhouse. Picture that enormous pumping cow heart with all that adrenaline—fear—soaking the meat." He added, "My cow is not pretty, but it's pretty to me."

Lynch's cow had arrived at the cow corral three weeks earlier, and it was put on display for just two and a half hours. One small child cried upon seeing it, and several other children seemed repulsed but fascinated. When a CowParade supervisor was told of these reactions, he immediately decided to move "Eat My Fear" out of public view, into a separate area known as "the cow hospital," where damaged cows are repainted.

The cow remained there, hidden under blankets, for the next ten days. On August 1st, Lynch's assistant asked a friend in New York to see how the cow was doing; a CowParade employee who reluctantly showed her the cow confided, "I'm thinking of chopping it up into little pieces." Alarmed, she passed the news on to Lynch, and the director began making phone calls to find out what was going on.



David Lynch's cow

By the time Commissioner Stern came to the corral to determine whether the CowParade people had overreacted, the cow had been moved into the safe. The shadowy, all-powerful CowParade Acceptability Committee had already rejected a Monica Lewinsky cow, a Ha-

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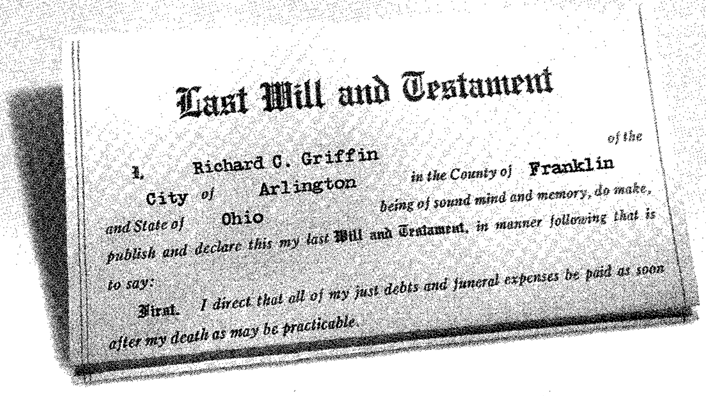

Last Will and Testament

I, Richard C. Griffin of the City of Arlington in the County of Franklin and State of Ohio being of sound mind and memory, do make, publish and declare this my last Will and Testament, in manner following that is to say:

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sidic cow, and a cow from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA, which was painted with anti-meat slogans.

After viewing Lynch's cow, Stern told CowParade officials that they'd acted correctly. "These cows are meant to be PG," he said. "Would you want a swastika cow, or a K.K.K. cow, or a cow performing an obscene act? If you can't stop this Lynch cow, you can't stop any cow."

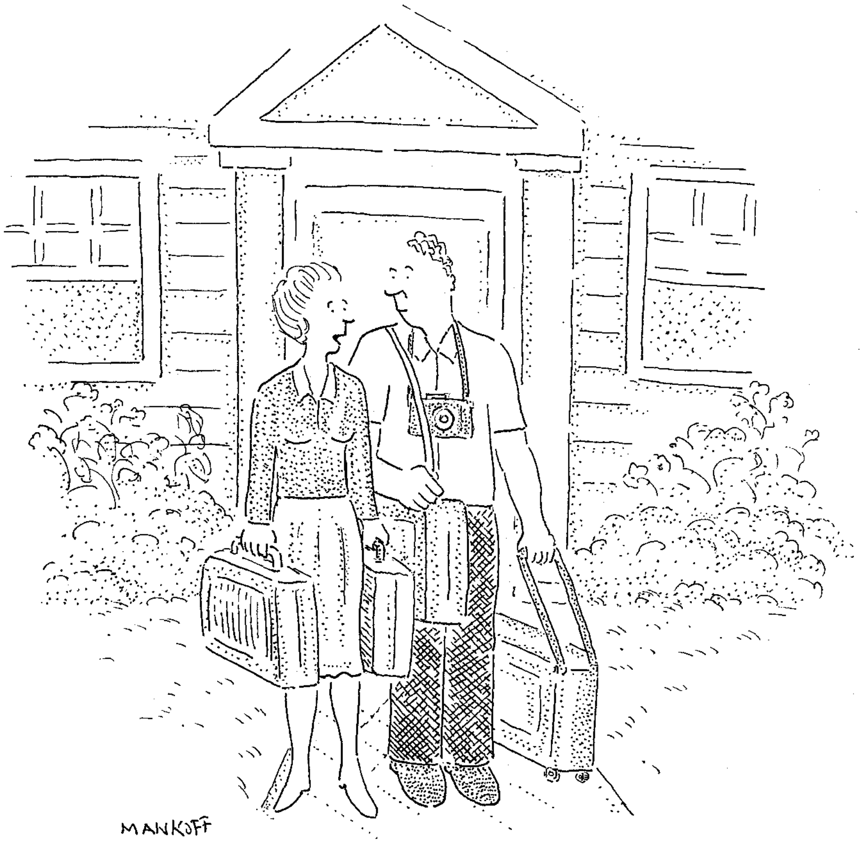
Forty-five minutes after Stern left the corral, a CowParade coverup began. According to a concerned CowParade associate who said he had been "seized by remorse and shame each time David Lynch's cow was further obscured from the public eye," "Eat My Fear" was bundled in bubble wrap and whisked downtown to a secret location. The next day, a "cowhand" arrived from Stamford, Connecticut—which is also enjoying a summer CowParade—and took possession of what he called the "problem cow."

A subsequent visit to the cow corral yielded no new information. When three CowParade employees were asked about the Lynch cow, each insisted that it had never been on the premises. In reply to further questions, a CowParade spokesman would say only, "CowParade has no comment."

The remorseful CowParade associate offered an explanation for the cow's disappearance: apparently, the organization was worried that exhibiting Lynch's cow would give ammunition to PETA, which has sued CowParade and the city seeking a public showing of its anti-meat cow. Or maybe the CowParade forces were trying not to alienate Mayor Giuliani. Last November, the Mayor compared CowParade favorably with the "Sensation" exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, whose funding he cut because the show featured, among other art works, a sliced-up cow and a cow head surrounded by maggots. CowParade, the Mayor optimistically told *Newsday*, will feature "complete cows, not cut-up and stuff like that."

In the meantime, David Lynch has not been able to learn anything about his cow's whereabouts. "My concern is that one person—and we don't even know who—is deciding what's best for society," Lynch said. "That's the beginning of the end. You should be free to hate my cow for yourself."

—*Tad Friend*



"Wait a minute—I know there's something we've forgotten to worry about."

POSTSCRIPT
A MAN OF PARTS

When Sir Alec Guinness died, on August 5th, at the age of eighty-six, the London *Times* made his passing its lead story, and rightly so; something of England—or, if you were a "Star Wars" fan, of a distant galaxy—had been lost. Olivier died in 1989, Richardson in 1983, and Gielgud earlier this year; now Guinness has quit the stage. Together, they could be viewed as theatre incorporated, and their combined body of work covers pretty much all of human activity. Olivier—comic-chthonic, tragical-historical, beating time—is the heart; the organ-voiced Gielgud is the head (half of it in the clouds); and the rumbling Richardson could be only the belly and the bowels. What, however, would belong to Guinness? The legs, for a start. "I have not got a character unless I have mastered exactly how he walks," he once said, and the stiff, stalking gait of his tortured colonel in "The Bridge on the River Kwai" was based, even though Guinness didn't realize it, on the sight of his own son recovering from polio. Then there were the ears, which stuck out like a schoolboy's, even—especially—as he neared the evensong of his life. And the Guinness teeth were stars in themselves: not his own, it is true, but the gnashing tombstones that were disclosed by his evil professor in "The Ladykillers," as if to confirm that Nosferatu had landed in a London backstreet.

That was Guinness territory, through and through: the exotic, the extreme, the extraterrestrially strange, taking root in ordinary soil, and flowering quite comfortably there—or, when the occasion demanded, vice versa. Almost single-handedly, Guinness insured that the Ealing comedies, named after an inglorious patch of west London, would blossom beyond their boundaries and shed, for a while, the parochial drudgery of British cinema. Late in life, he came to television; his George Smiley, first in "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," and then in "Smiley's People," was a blessing to John le Carré; it was good to see flesh

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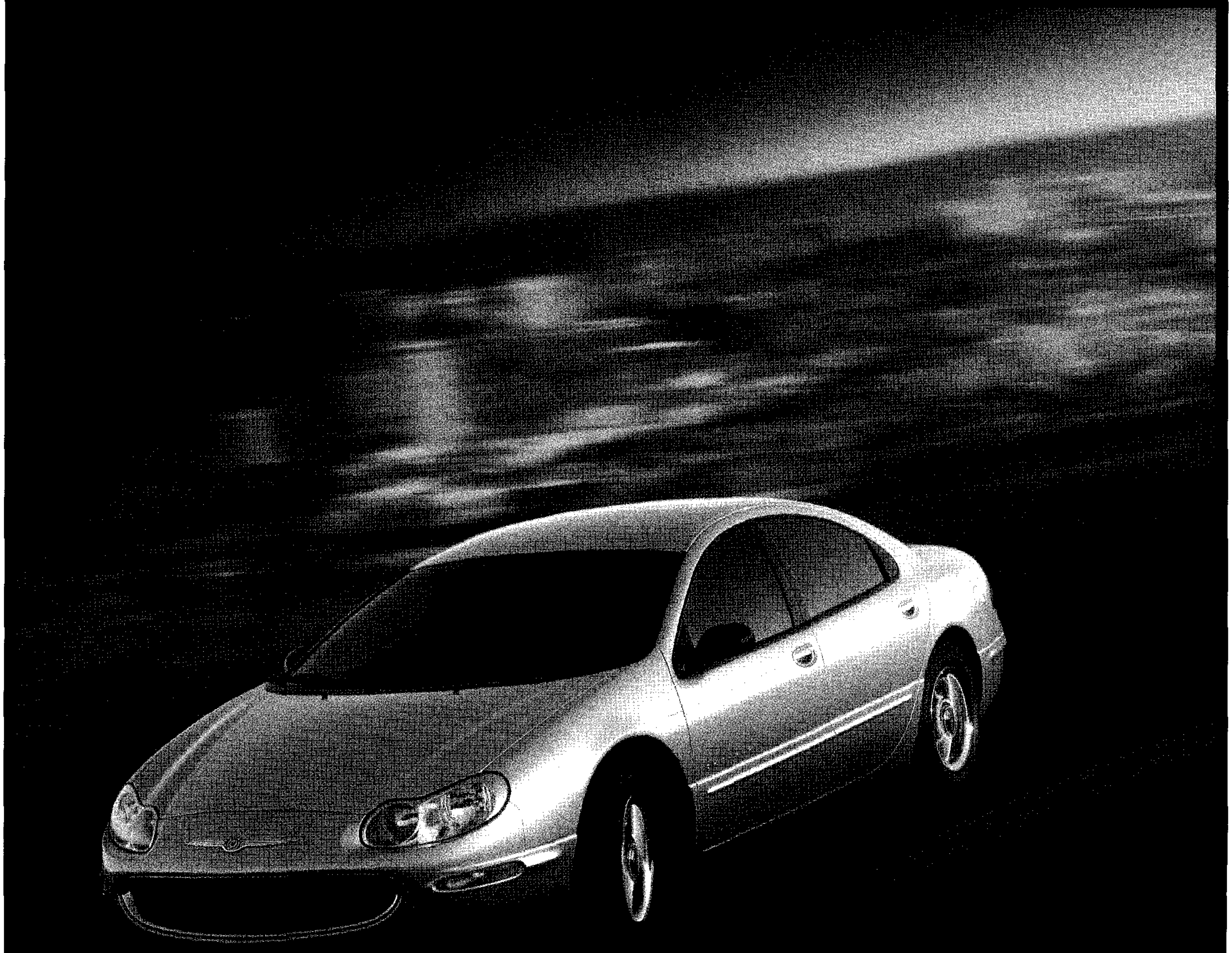

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SENATOR LIEBERMAN'S WRONG CHOICES

"If you look at both men, Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, they're both people who throughout their lives made the right choices. Both led very responsible lives and are people who, when faced with tough choices, have time and time again made the right choice."
—*Spokesman for Vice-President Gore.*

January, 1944: On three consecutive nights, in wantonly selfish infantile outbursts, stands in crib around 2 A.M. hollering "Mama! Mama! Mama!"

July, 1947: Discovers anthill while playing in back yard in Stamford, Connecticut. Shoves long stick into hole.

March, 1952: Self-grading a fourth-grade mathematics pop quiz, deliberately marks as "wrong" several correct answers, hoping to ingratiate himself with more popular boys in class.

June, 1954: Hears Good Humor truck a half block away. From little blue Jewish National Fund charity box in kitchen, "borrows" fifty cents.

February, 1957: Receives birthday gift of brown necktie and red necktie from grandmother. Wears brown necktie next time he sees her, knowing this will hurt her feelings, because she will assume he doesn't like red one.

May, 1962: While away at college, neglects to make "Happy Mother's Day" call. Does call next day, but with lame apology—says phone was "being used."

October, 1965: Falls asleep during High Holy Days sermon titled "Sandy Koufax: Good for the Jews *and* Bad for the Jews." Afterward, tells rabbi, "Oh, I loved that sermon."

April, 1967: Jaywalks in New Haven during antiwar rally.

June, 1969: Reads "Portnoy's Complaint," laughs knowingly all the way through.

August, 1975: Drops cast-iron skillet on bare foot, takes name of Lord in vain.

February, 1982: While meeting friends for Sunday brunch at dairy restaurant on Upper West Side of Manhattan, double-parks.

June, 1993: Mixes recyclable plastic bottles with regular trash.

November, 1997: Attending state dinner at White House, tells waiter bearing dessert plate, "Normally I'm not a cake eater, but, sure, go ahead."

August 7, 2000, 10:30 A.M.: Anticipating formal announcement of anointment as Gore's running mate, tells media representatives gathered in his driveway, "Miracles happen," as if he, Mr. Big Shot all of a sudden, now were in charge of what is and what isn't a miracle.

August 8, 2000: Declines to repudiate the Reverend Jerry Falwell, who the previous day has publicly praised him.

September 13, 2000: On campaign visit to North Carolina, "inadvertently" consumes entire slab of spareribs. Later claims his handlers had assured him it was tofu.

October 2, 2000: Within earshot of reporters, tells ethnically offensive limerick about George W. Bush, two girls from Darien, and the word "seersucker."

November 8, 2000: Kicks the family dog.

—*Mark Singer*

---

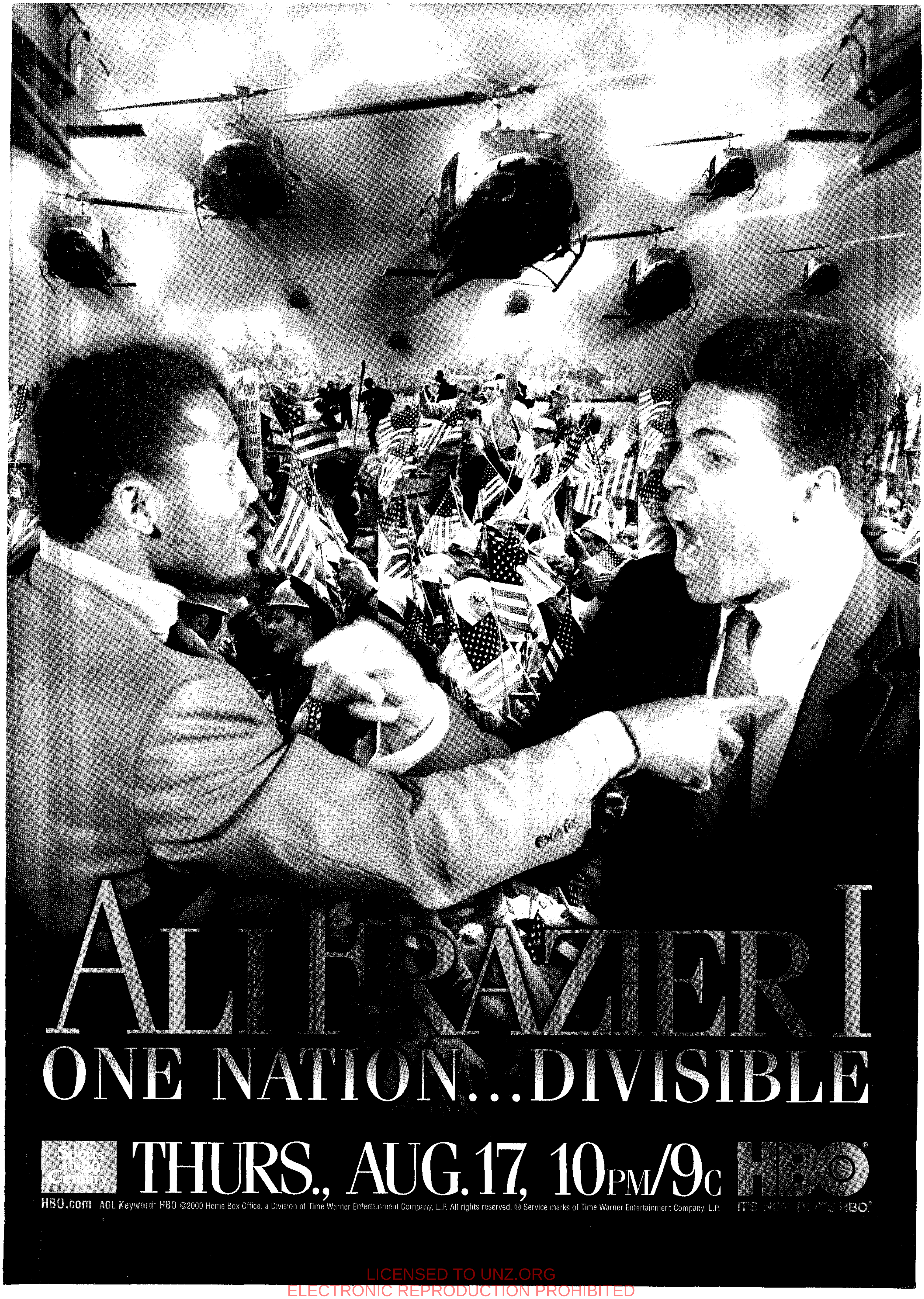
being put on the bones of the books—though not too much flesh, for Guinness's Smiley lacked the monkish rotundity of the original. But this shyly smiling cuckold, eyes blinking behind spectacles that were themselves like twin televisions—how could such a man, swaying on the brink of dullness, negotiate the labyrinths of treachery? Guinness realized, perhaps, that nobody but a plain man could survive in so cruel a world. As a sailor, he had served in the Second World War, when all manner of unexceptional people were reborn to grandeur and died in action; as a performer, he always retained the air of an innocent clerk—out of H. G. Wells or, more darkly, Conrad—caught in the cogs of adventure.

Guinness never knew his father. He grew up in "about thirty different hotels, lodgings, and flats," he said, and his imagination seems to have provided more richly furnished accommodations. The restlessness of his youth never left him, and it may have spurred his conversion, in midlife, to Roman Catholicism; despite an abiding faith, he spent his career hiding out in roles—Freud, Fagin, and Father Brown, as well as Disraeli and Hitler—as if fleeing from creditors, or a shadowy past, or the need to be himself. Not surprisingly, he was a friend of T. S. Eliot. "One wasn't quite sure if he was there or not," the actor said of the poet, although it could have been the other way around, and there is no better guide to Guinness than his part in the first production of "The Cocktail Party," in 1949. "An Unidentified Guest, later identified as Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly," is how the dramatis personae describes his role, and Sir Henry deepens the mystery:

> What we know of other people
> Is only our memory of the moments
> During which we knew them. . . .
> . . . We must also remember
> That at every meeting we are meeting a
> stranger.

The moments of Alec Guinness are enough to feed memories for another century, and to make generations less diffident than his wonder who this beguiling, never wholly unmenacing stranger might be. By all accounts, he was kind, courtly, not without mischief, and dangerously attuned to the behavior of others; he claimed to have derived inspiration from observing a shoebill in a Cairo zoo. ("It doesn't like being watched; that appealed to me no end," he recalled. "It likes to watch.") His literacy, prodigious by the standards of his trade, was without snobbery; one holiday reading list, cited in his published journals, included Herodotus, Shakespeare, and Elmore Leonard, and there cannot be many knights of eighty-four who cultivate an addiction to "The Simpsons." What drives a shy Englishman to become an international film star, goodness knows; but, in the interests of goodness, it is proper to leave him as we first saw him—bounding up the stairwell, hair flopping over his brow, all grins and elbows, eager as a puppy to meet the lucky Pip. Guinness's Herbert Pocket, in the 1946 film of "Great Expectations," showed that the spirit of Dickens was intact; that you could be flamboyant without falsity, and pencil sharp in your generosity of heart. One wasn't quite sure whether Guinness was there or not; but now that he has vanished he suddenly feels more real—a more indispensable presence, at once more saintly and sinister—than ever before.

—*Anthony Lane*



ALI FRAZIER I

ONE NATION...DIVISIBLE

Sports of the 20th Century

THURS., AUG. 17, 10PM/9C

HBO

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THE FINANCIAL PAGE

SPORTS MILLIONAIRES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

Arthur Soden would have loved "The Replacements," the new movie starring Keanu Reeves as the quarterback Shane Falco, perhaps the first heroic scab in Hollywood history. Soden was the owner of the National League's Boston baseball club in the late nineteenth century, and a notorious cheapskate. He put benchwarmers to work as turnstile attendants, and made his players go into the stands to retrieve foul balls. Nothing frustrated Soden more than his players' habit of leaving Boston for better offers elsewhere, because it meant that to keep them he had to spend money. His solution was something called the reserve clause, which gave a team the right to "reserve" a player's services for the following year. When the player signed a new contract in the spring, he was reserved for the next season as well, and so on into perpetuity. Soden persuaded his fellow-owners that if they all agreed to respect the reserve clause they'd save a bundle on labor costs. And for almost a century that's what happened.

Ballplayers don't have to take tickets anymore, though. In 1975, an arbitrator's ruling abolished the reserve clause in baseball, ushering in the era of free agency, which came to the N.B.A. in 1976 and, finally, to the N.F.L. in 1992. In baseball, the average salary is now two million dollars; in the N.B.A., it's three and a half million dollars; and in the N.F.L. it's one million dollars. But even though professional athletes are among the best-paid employees on the planet, the Arthur Sodens of the world are still sitting across from them at the negotiating table. What's curious is that most Americans are on the Sodens' side.

Hence "The Replacements." Loosely based on the 1987 N.F.L. strike, during which three games were played by replacement players, the movie features a motley collection of strikebreaking "poor nobodies who play to win," as opposed to the "bitchy millionaires" who are on strike because (in the words of one) "you know how much insurance on a Ferrari costs?" The replacements are all heart—"just like us," as one fan says. By the movie's end, the stadium is full, and the team's owner has been rewarded with a trip to the playoffs.

"The Replacements" is so excessive in its resentment of professional athletes that it's hard to take seriously. But spend ten minutes listening to sports-talk radio and you'll find that the resentment is widely shared. During the N.F.L. strike, fans sided with the owners by a three-to-one margin. And during the 1998 N.B.A. lockout it was hard to find anyone willing to defend the players. So "The Replacements" is an almost painfully accurate representation of athletes as the general public sees them: spoiled brats who should know their place.

MICHAEL WITTE

All the spoiled brats want, though, is to be paid what they're worth. In most industries, the process of figuring out what workers are worth is pretty simple: the free market decides. But that process does not apply to professional sports. Take Peter Warrick, the Florida State wide receiver who was perhaps the most coveted player in this year's N.F.L. draft. Warrick was drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals. He signed a nice long-term contract but will not earn anything near what he would have earned had he been able to shop his services to the highest bidder among all thirty-one N.F.L. teams. The Bengals drafted him, so they own him.

The trouble is that the market for a young player is monopsonistic, which means there's only one buyer. Whichever team drafts that player out of college or high school controls his career for the next several years. This serves one obvious function: it keeps the richest teams from immediately snapping up all the best young players. But it also artificially depresses the salaries earned by the Warricks of the world in their first few years in the league. And, given that the average N.F.L. player's career lasts only four years, monopsony often means being underpaid for good.

Historically, this state of affairs has made players' unions different from other labor unions. Most unions try to make the labor market as uncompetitive as possible by limiting the supply of labor. Players' unions, on the other hand, have typically tried to make the labor market more competitive, not less. An autoworker has no real bargaining power with Ford or G.M. That's why he needs a union. But a football or baseball player who's good enough to play in the pros does have bargaining power. He just needs to be free to use it—which is where the union comes in.

In an ideal world, there would be a true free market for athletes. Players would sign with whomever they wished, and owners would pay players what they had to. This is the way it works in Silicon Valley. Oracle and Intel open the vaults to prevent hot-shot programmers and engineers from defecting. Of course, the economics of sports will never completely mimic those of the Valley, because everyone involved in pro sports has a stake in preserving competitive balance. But the burden of preserving that balance rests on the owners, not the players.

The owners have somehow convinced fans that the opposite is true, holding soaring player salaries responsible for everything from higher hot-dog prices to the struggles of small-market teams. But what high salaries are really responsible for is slimmer profits for the owners, which is how it should be, since it's the players, and not the owners, who put fans in the seats. That is a principle that Keanu Reeves puts into practice every time he gets twenty million dollars to star in a movie.

—*James Surowiecki*

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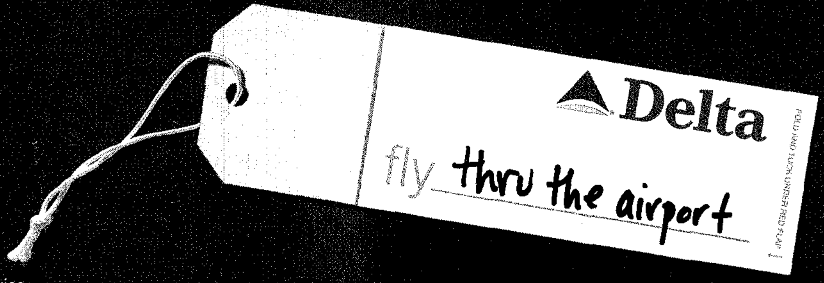
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LETTER FROM VIRGINIA

HORSE COUNTRY

The girls of Charlottesville learn to compete.

BY LARISSA MACFARQUHAR

Two hundred years ago, Midway Farm, just outside Charlottesville, Virginia, was a tobacco plantation of around seven hundred acres. The main house on the property is a red brick Federal with a white-columned porch; there is a dark stain on the floor of the living room that house tradition claims to be the blood of a fallen soldier. Over the years, Midway's land has been divided many times. One tract is now a series of paddocks and fields owned by a professional stable named Millington; Quail Ridge Farm, next door, was also carved out of the original plantation. The surrounding countryside consists mostly of large estates, except for the Foxfield Racetrack, which hosts steeplechases twice a year, in the spring and fall, and one patch that used to be an estate but was, over horrified protests, sold to developers. The developers built it up with medium-sized houses just a few acres apart, almost all of which, owing to sparse landscaping and new trees, are visible from the road. The result is a mixture of farming and countrified suburbia that is satisfactory to no one. The new people complain about deer eating their flowers and raccoons eating their garbage; the old people complain about the new people.

Millington and Midway are divided by a river, and another river runs along the Quail Ridge property line. Because of the rivers, the plantation land is sandy and stays soft in winter, which makes it suitable for riding horses throughout the year. Midway Farm itself now extends to about a hundred acres, as does Quail Ridge, and although some of that acreage is wooded, there is still plenty of pastureland, and fields to ride through, and the families at both estates keep horses in barns on the property. Midway is currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Kelly III, who live most of the year in New York, in a town house at Fifth Avenue and Ninety-third Street. Quail Ridge is owned by Peter and Elaine Licata, who moved to Charlottesville in 1996, from Silicon Valley. A couple of generations back, almost every girl in Charlottesville who rode kept ponies in her own barn, as the Kellys and the Licatas do, but since then riding has become so popular that it has spread to girls from families who either can't afford or don't want their own barns. Many such girls who live in Charlottesville keep their ponies at Millington and take lessons there. The Millington girls are children of doctors and schoolteachers and businessmen: about half go to public school and half to a private school in town, St. Anne's-Belfield.

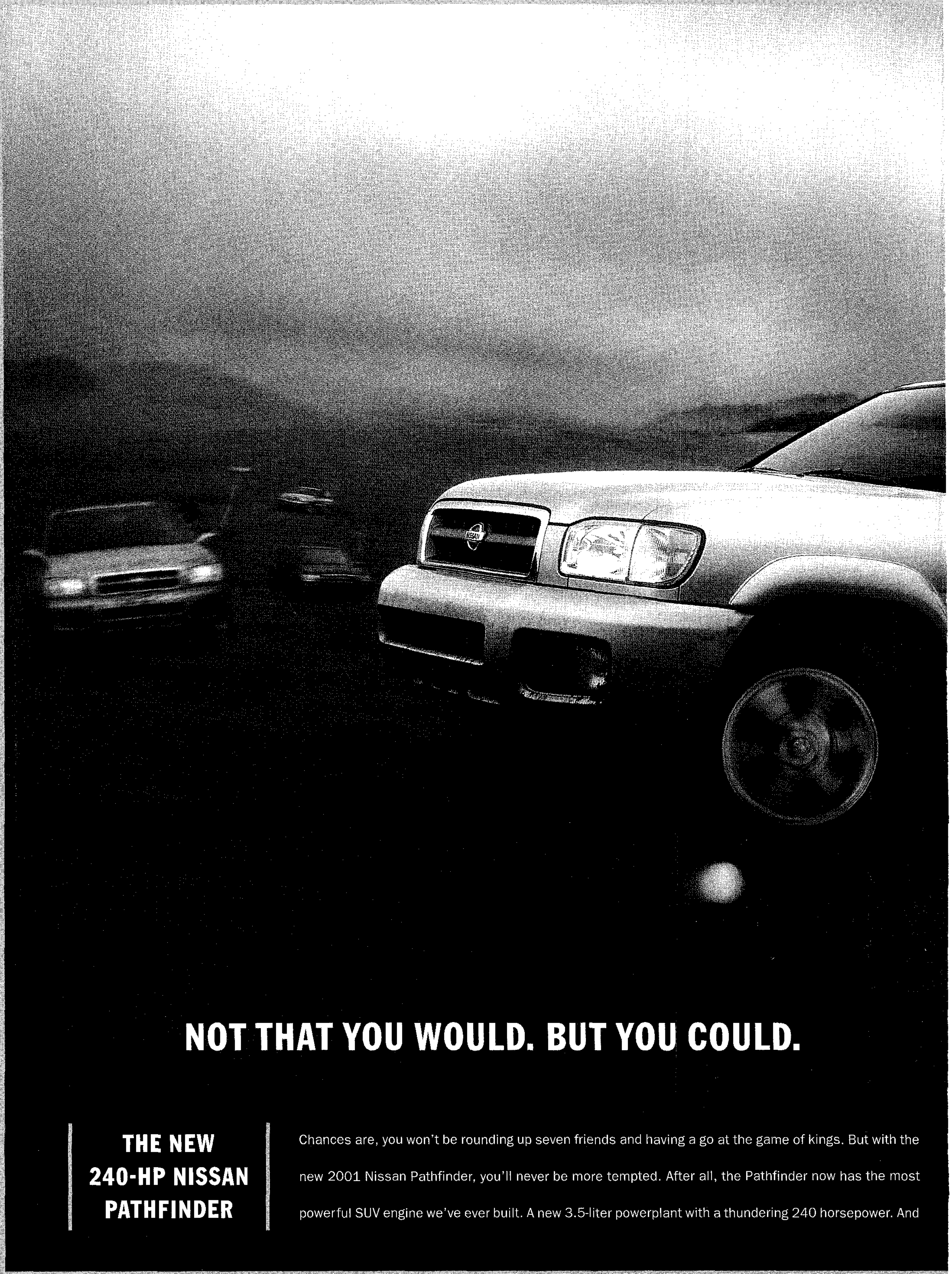
In Charlottesville, as elsewhere, love of horses is a girl thing, and Charlottesville horse tradition, with its protocols, hierarchies, and lines of exclusion, is transmitted down the female line. Riding's popularity with Charlottesville mothers is due in part to the belief that there is something about a horse that prolongs the sunny term of a girl's boyless childhood. The pleasures and terrors of the barn are those of middle-school girl culture, with its mixture of affection, brutality, and frequent grooming. In a barn, a girl will plant kisses on a pony's nose, throw her arms around a pony's neck, and spend endless hours in the brushing and braiding of its mane. In the riding ring, she will struggle, sometimes by pleading, sometimes by inflicting pain, to enforce her pony's conformity to the rules of riding. And always—if only in the back of her mind—she fears a humiliating fall.

At Midway Farm, every member of the Kelly family owns a horse, but the most enthusiastic rider is Margaret Kelly, who is twelve. Margaret started clamoring for a pony when she was three or four, at which point she rejected dolls, finding them silly. When Margaret was seven, her parents bought her a chestnut-mare mutt; Margaret named the pony

Emily Mastervich runs the Kellys' horse barn and gives lessons to their daughter, Margaret. Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.

U Go Girl—G.G. for short—and has now broken her in to the point where she bucks Margaret off only a few times each summer. Margaret's father is an investment banker at J. P. Morgan; her mother used to have a private practice as a clinical psychologist, but she gave up working when she had children. Margaret has a twin brother, Teddy, and a younger brother, John, who is ten. In addition to the Kelly family, the household at Midway consists of the Kellys' cook and handyperson, Nestor Ugalino, and Emily Mastervich, who is twenty-three and manages the Kellys' barn. Silently present, too, in the form of a large, dour oil portrait that hangs in the living room, is Mrs. Kelly's ancestor Dr. Andrew Turnbull, who emigrated to Florida from Scotland in 1768.

Like most horsey girls, Margaret loves all kinds of animals. She used to be really into snakes; she would pick them up off the ground and talk to them. Also like most horsey girls, she went through a phase of wanting to be a vet, but decided that it would be too sad. She is very athletic: in addition to riding ribbons, she has won trophies for tennis, swimming, and soccer. She is known in her family for coming out with weird pieces of information. She can describe, for instance, the entire process of tanning a hide, and she knows that catfish have whiskers that sting you if you touch them. Although Margaret is twelve, her face is still a child's face. Everything about it is round: round blue eyes; small, round nose; small mouth that is often open in an O of surprise or anticipation. She still talks like a child, too, in breathless arpeggios, but she lopes along with the spindly-limbed teen-age awkwardness that is called, with particular appropriateness in her case, coltish. Mar-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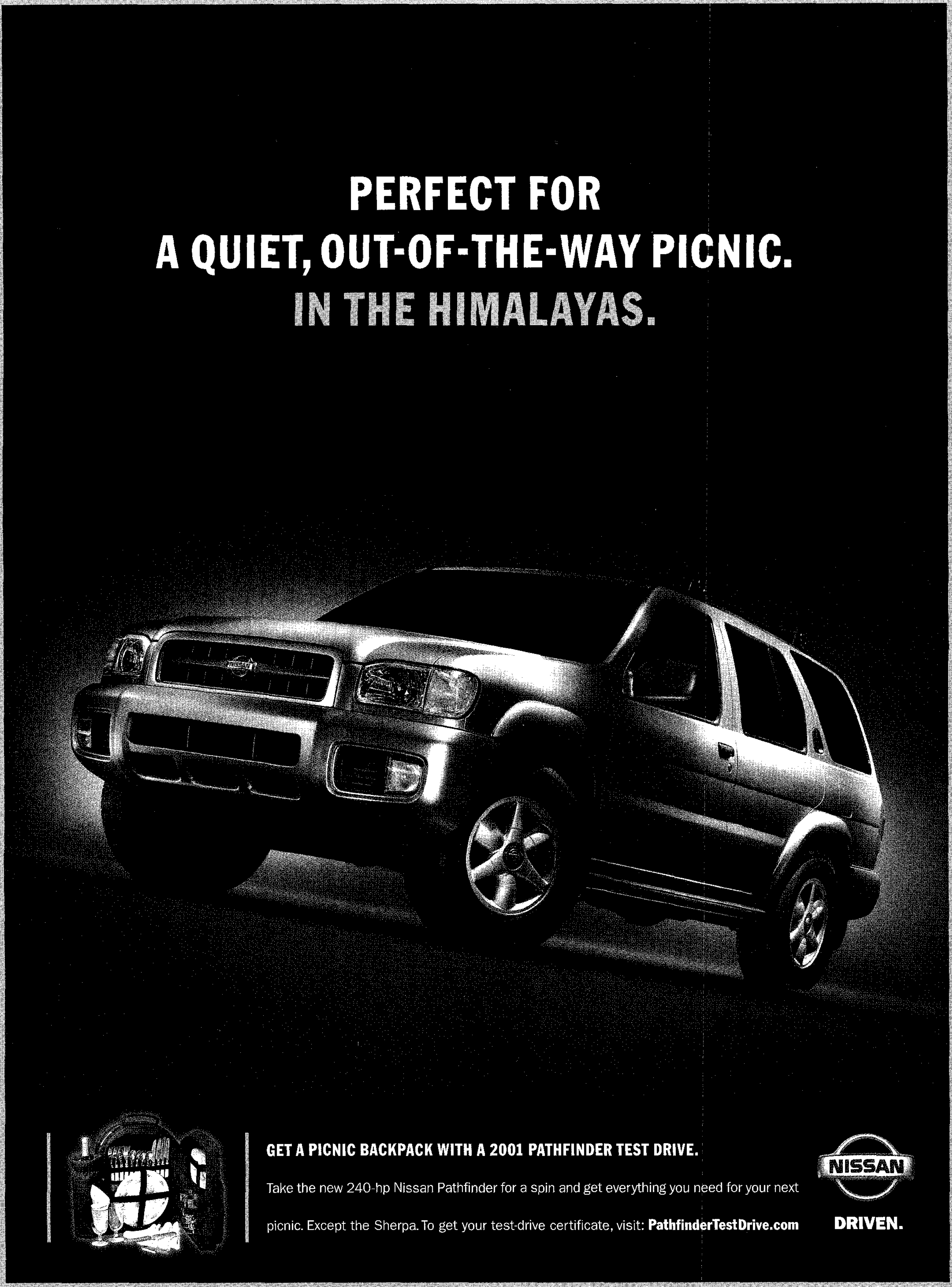

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garet is as clean and bright as a new tennis ball, possessing the sort of loveliness sought after by casting directors because it seems to capture the essence of childhood, and, indeed, she was picked to be one of the girls in an alternate cast for the movie "Madeline."

For Margaret, Midway is paradise. From the main house, it is a five-minute walk to the barn, down a dirt road that leads past grassy paddocks, where the horses are led to graze when it's nice out. Near the barn, and near the cottage where Emily lives, stands what the Kellys call the Sports Court: an old outbuilding that Mr. Kelly recently converted into an all-weather basketball court and hockey rink. On the other side of the house, there is a swimming pool, a tennis court, a pond to canoe in, and a formal flower garden. Beyond the flower garden are hayfields. Margaret likes to thrash her way into these fields, stumbling through uncut grass that is taller than she is, and when she is hot and laughing and covered in dust she lets herself fall backward into the bristly stalks.

HOLE IN FORTY-SEVEN

During the summers at Midway, Margaret often spends time hanging out with Emily at the barn. One afternoon when she arrived, Emily was spraying the horses with fly spray; the air was chokingly thick and sweet and smelled like furniture polish. Emily's assistants were mucking out stalls. One, Laurie, wore a T-shirt that said, "I'm Drunk in Texas and I Can't Find My Horse."

"Why don't you help Laurie with something?" Emily said. Laurie told Margaret to dump out the horses' water buckets.

"That's such a waste of water!" Margaret chirped. She was in a giggly mood that day.

"It's gross, stagnant water, full of hay," Laurie said. "You drink some and see how you like it."

"Don't say that, Laurie, she'll do it," Emily yelled from the tack room.

There was a pause, and then a soft splashing noise from Margaret's end of the barn. "Yum!" Margaret called triumphantly.

Lessons at Millington are conducted by a woman in her early fifties named Muffin Barnes. Muffin is skinny, blue-eyed, short-haired, sun-weathered, and constantly moving. She has been teaching riding for twenty-five years. One morning, she had scheduled a group lesson at Millington's upper riding ring with Molly, Caitlin, and Caroline. "Perky butt! Perky butt!" Muffin shouted at the girls from the center of the ring as they warmed up at a trot. "And canter!" The lesson would be the last chance everyone had to improve before a horse show Millington was hosting that weekend, and the mood was tense. Caroline was especially nervous about the show, because her four-year-old chestnut mare, Belle, had never been in a show before, and was wild and unpredictable at the best of times. Caroline had, it's true, traded in her lovely, loyal old horse, Sashay, precisely because she was bored with her dependability and wanted a challenge, but this morning, with the show before her, Belle didn't seem quite so appealing. Caroline used to ride with Margaret before the Kellys hired Emily to run their barn. She is seventeen; she has been riding since she was six; her eyes and hair are as warm and lushly brown as a mink coat.

After warmup, it was time to take turns jumping. "O.K., Molly, you're a giant person in your heels! Giant, giant, *giant!*" Muffin cried as Molly, a blond ten-year-old, took off at a canter. Sparkles, Molly's gray pony, lunged over a jump, and Molly bumped back into a trot. "You sat on her with your fat rear end!" Muffin yelled, irritated. "Oh, Molly, that was pathetic. Do it again. Now, Molly, mean! Mean, mean, mean, *mean!*" Molly went at the jump again. "Good girl," Muffin said. Molly trotted back to where everyone else was waiting, standing in a group in the shade of the riding ring's only tree. Caitlin, a sturdy, brown-haired eleven-year-old who rides a palomino named Lilly, was next. "Now, Caitlin, I don't care what you do, but if you hit that horse I'll hit you," Muffin said. "O.K., grace and style, Caitlin, grace and style." Caitlin began to clop around the ring in a lumpy canter. "Caitlin, get your hands out of your stomach!" Muffin shouted. "You're sitting, not riding! Arch your back! Do you understand the language of English? You're supposed to be *trotting!*" Lilly continued to canter as before, and lurched heavily over a fence. Muffin watched for a minute or so, then strode across the ring, waving her arms. "Just stop," she told Caitlin, who had no expression on her face. "Lilly can't take it anymore."

Muffin loves teaching, but often, these days, she finds herself disappointed by her students. She says that Millington girls have become afflicted by a fear of falling. "I used to let kids fall off all the time," she says. "But not anymore, because they react so much worse than they used to. They *scream*. It freaks me out; I can't handle it." Girls now are more pampered than they used to be, she feels, and more conscious of danger. "When I started teaching, in the early seventies," she says, "the kids were tough as nails, and we used to do wild things. We'd play cowboys and Indians; we used to race at Foxfield's, and I mean flat-out race. They'd jump anything. Anything! You'd set up a four-foot fence, and they'd love it." It's not just at Millington that this is no longer the case. Thirty years ago, there was no such thing as a two-foot fence in competitions, but now those fences are quite common. Muffin is continually trying to make her girls more aggressive, but it's a losing battle. Even if they weren't chicken, most don't have the *desire* in them—they don't have horses in the blood the way girls used to. They arrive at the stable, ride in their lessons, and go home. They give up riding in high school, in order to have time for a social life and the team sports that will get them into college. "When I was a kid," Muffin says sadly, "if you had told me I had to stay in the barn all day and muck out stalls, I would have jumped for joy."

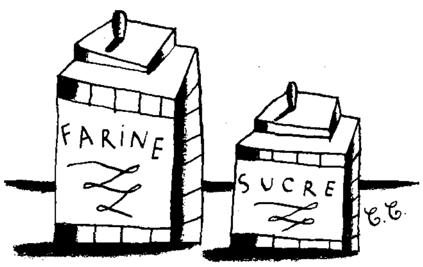
After the lesson, the girls returned to the barn to pull their ponies' manes for the show. Pulling a mane involves yanking out longer hairs with a metal comb, in order to make the mane more even, and flatter against the neck. Muffin showed Caitlin and Molly how to do it. "I like a pulled mane," Muffin told them, as her hand whipped in and out of Sparkles's mane, and clumps of wiry gray hair began to form a pile on the floor. "It makes a horse look cared for, like she's been to the beauty parlor." Caroline asked Muffin to help her pull Belle's mane. Most horses don't mind the process once they're used to it, but Belle had never had her mane pulled before and wouldn't let anyone come near her. "Pinch her nose, Caroline," Muffin ordered. A horse's nose is very sensitive, and usually if you pinch it hard enough the horse will become so focussed on that pain that it will forget about any other disconcerting thing you might be doing to it and stand perfectly still. Caroline pinched as hard as she could, but still Belle tossed her head and stamped her foot and rolled her eyes in a crazy way. "Time for drugs," Muffin said briskly. "Does anyone have some Ace?" She filled a syringe with a small amount of tranquillizer and injected it into Belle's neck. A little later, they made a second attempt. Molly wandered over to watch. "Let's try the twitch," Muffin said. A twitch—a wooden stick with a small loop of rope at the end—is a tool for pinching a horse's nose harder than you can with your fingers: you hook the loop of rope over the nose and twist the stick around so that the loop gets tighter and tighter. "Oh, I can't watch this," Molly said, and ran away. Caroline slipped the twitch over Belle's nose and twisted it around and around, but it made no difference. Belle half-reared up and let out a terrible neigh; Caroline jerked backward away from her. It was a long time before Belle's mane was done.

The countryside around Midway is full of dirt paths for horses, and one afternoon Margaret and Emily decided to go for a trail ride. Margaret had arranged the time the day before, fitting into Emily's schedule. This last fact was a source of irritation to Mrs. Kelly, who felt that Emily should be available to Margaret whenever Margaret wanted her to be.

"You should be more assertive with her," Mrs. Kelly told Margaret. "Just tell her what time you want her to be ready for *you*."

"O.K.," Margaret said.

Mrs. Kelly is blond and athletic-looking, and her habitual expression is one of stubborn determination, though there is something about the set of her mouth and chin, and the way she wears a barrette in her hair, that makes the expression resemble, in an engaging way, childhood mulishness. As a child, Mrs. Kelly was passionate about horses; she owned a pony named Tinker's Dam, because it wasn't worth one. Still, when Margaret was born she decided not to introduce her to riding, fearing that Margaret, too, would become consumed by the sport, to the exclusion of all other activities.



Margaret fetched G.G.'s equipment from the tack room and proceeded to tack her up: first the saddle blanket, then the saddle, and finally the bridle and bit. When she had finished, she kissed G.G. on the nose, climbed up onto the saddle, and urged her forward. She was a little nervous, since this was one of the first times she had ridden her in several months, and in the past G.G. had tended to regard such reunions as occasions for a renegotiation of duties and had bucked her off. Margaret dug her feet into the stirrups. Every vacation, when Margaret rides, she is compelled to confront the reality of things like stirrups. In the horse novels that she grew up reading, the fantasy is always of riding bareback, because the fantasy horse is wild, and because the horse and child are one, and have no need of equipment to secure their union. So far, the romance between G.G. and Margaret has been wrought of less elevated stuff than this. Margaret realizes that G.G. is green and temperamental, and that horses in general are not very smart, and G.G. behaves no better for Margaret than she does for Emily. Then again, G.G.'s wilfulness is part of what Margaret likes about riding. She relishes the struggle for control; she likes that G.G. is not a perfect horse, with no more personality than a tennis racquet. But when Margaret loses the struggle and G.G. bucks, it is difficult to know what to think. Should she believe, as the horse novels do, that a horse is ruled by love, and if she wins its heart she will win at competitions? Or should she believe people like Emily, who tell her that, though talent is important, obedience can also be purchased: that a hundred-thousand-dollar Thoroughbred will always perform better than a five-thousand-dollar mutt like G.G., no matter how skillful or sensitive a rider Margaret should become?

The horses headed toward the woods at the end of the property. At the edge of a hayfield, someone had set up a couple of jumps, and Emily suggested that

Margaret try them. Margaret was planning to enter the Millington show on Saturday, but, having spent the whole spring in New York, she was out of practice. Margaret does not like to lose, even to girls who ride every day throughout the year.

"Since you haven't really jumped her for a while, make sure you get her following where *you* want her to go," Emily told her. "Make sure she conforms to *you.*"

"O.K.," Margaret said.

The jumps weren't particularly high, but they were solidly built. In show-jumping and hunter competitions—which are judged by the clock and according to the elegance of the horse, respectively—jumps are constructed of wooden poles that fall down if a horse's hoof knocks against them. Jumps that don't collapse in this way are more dangerous, because they can cause a horse to catch its hoof and fall. Solid jumps are used in a different type of competition—the kind that Emily competes in—called three-day eventing. Eventing consists of jumping, dressage (which demands tight control over small movements like stepping sidewise), and cross-country (in which horse and rider race through a course of obstacles designed to be as exhausting and scary as possible). Margaret pointed G.G. at one of the jumps, cantered a short distance toward it, and sailed over. "Most girls wouldn't dare jump a pile like that," Emily told her approvingly. Emily has made it her business to indoctrinate Margaret in the merits of three-day eventing, which is less well known and less prestigious than show jumping and hunting but, in Emily's opinion, tougher. Toughness is important to Emily. She is tough herself: short, blond, and built like a swimmer. When she stands, she stands definitely, as if bolted to the ground. She smiles a lot, showing her dimples, but, at least when she is working, her eyes retain a wariness, possibly owing to the fact that she is often required to smile at people who either are paying her for something or are in a position to award her a prize.

The hunter and show-jumping world and the eventing world are divided by a mixture of money and class resentment. Roughly speaking, eventers think hunter-jumpers are wimpy rich kids who don't care about horses, and jumpers think eventers are thrill-seeking lunatics who don't know how to ride properly. The money stereotype is well founded. A top eventing horse costs between seventy-five thousand and a hundred and fifty thousand dollars; a top show-jumping horse sells for a million. And, whereas most riders in the eventing world train and care for the horses they ride (they are more often professional riders and trainers like Emily than owners themselves), in the show-jumping and hunter worlds it is usual for a rider to buy a horse that has already been trained, and to leave the messy barn work to a groom. In hunter shows, according to Emily, you see riders with walkie-talkies radioing for grooms to bring their horses to them when they are due to compete. Hunter classes are especially egregious because, since they are judged on the horse rather than on the rider, the richest person—or the one with the most expensive horse—usually wins. Expensive horses are often disdainfully referred to as "push-button horses"—horses so beautifully trained that they will execute a course perfectly for anyone, so all the rider has to do is stay on. "There are riders and there are passengers," Emily says.

It is impossible to compete in the horse world without thinking about money, but Emily is especially aware of it because she has never had much. She grew up in rural Michigan, near Kalamazoo, where her father works in the marketing department of the post office. When she was six, her mother, who had grown up in a city and had always wanted a horse, bought a horse for herself and a pony for Emily. Emily liked the animals but hated riding until she was ten, when someone introduced her to competitions. She discovered that she competed well, and it was to winning, rather than to riding per se, that she became addicted. When Emily was in high school, she rode every day after classes, and every weekend. She never went to parties. She missed her prom because she was away at a competition. She decided not to go to college but to try to make it on the eventing circuit instead. For a period in 1995, when she was seventeen, she was ranked thirteenth in the country; and though now, at twenty-three, she is no longer quite so

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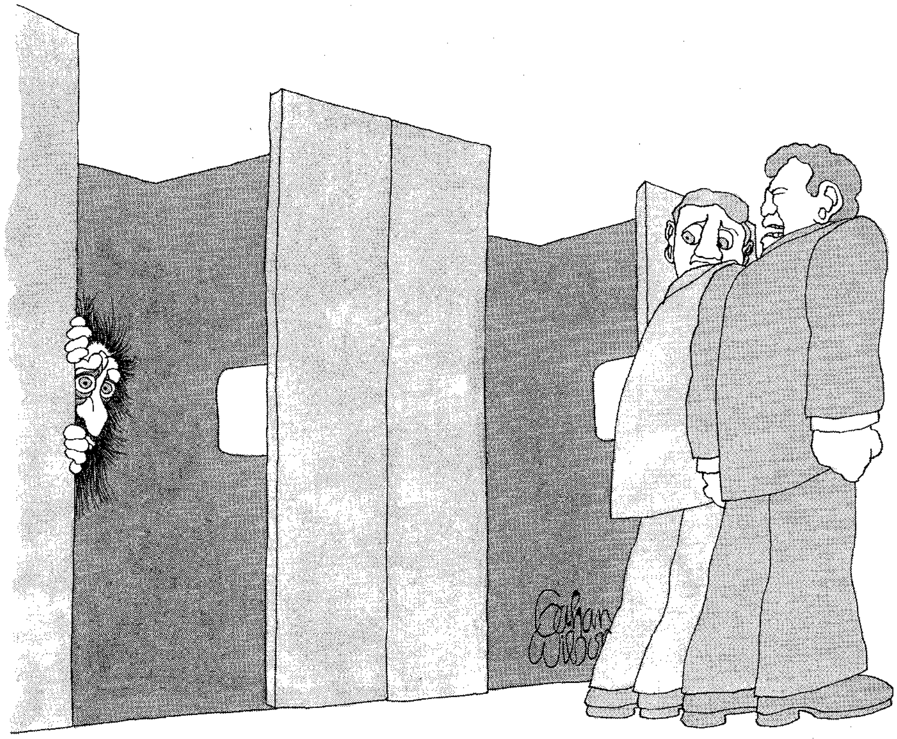
highly ranked, she does make a living. She stays in the cottage on the Kellys' land rent free and has use of stalls at their barn in return for feeding and exercising their horses and teaching Margaret. The Kellys do not, however, pay her a salary, so she puts together an income from various sources: she gets paid to ride other people's horses in competitions (they keep the prize money), she gives lessons, she trains other people's horses for them, and she sells horses for a ten-per-cent commission.

There have been conflicts between these activities. For instance, Mrs. Kelly likes Emily to be around to lead trail rides if the family has weekend guests, but on weekends Emily needs to be away at shows. "That's happened a couple of times, and we've survived through it," Emily says. Sooner or later, though, Emily will have to leave Midway. If she is going to compete internationally, she needs to find an owner rich enough and competitive enough to buy several extraordinary horses, and pay her to ride them so that she can jettison other demands on her time. Most top-level riders are considerably older than Emily, not so much because their experience has made them more skillful as because it takes time to build up the reputation necessary to secure a situation like that. "My goal is to ride in the Olympics," Emily says, "and people at that level don't have to worry about training twelve horses a day to make a living. They're free to concentrate on their own training, and that's why they're as good as they are."

Lack of money is an obstacle for a rider, but, at least in the horse world in Charlottesville, having money, if it is the wrong sort of money, presents its own problems. It is a delicate business, for instance, being a new landowner around Midway. If you buy an estate with a barn and don't use it, you will likely be resented by old families for wasting the facility, but if you decide to buy horses and participate in shows you may be resented for trying to break in. The Kellys have evaded this bind, for the most part, by buying pleasure horses—not the sort to pose a threat in competition. Their next-door neighbors, Peter and Elaine Licata, had a more difficult time settling in when they moved from Silicon Valley. "Charlottesville is a very hard place to make friends," Mrs. Licata says. "People are old Virginia, and when you're an outsider coming in it's like, Why have you moved here? In this community, you have to be part of the horse industry. Otherwise, you're kind of left out." Mr. Licata is a C.E.O. and investor in the technology business, and Mrs. Licata is a housewife; neither had had much previous experience with horses. But soon after their move the Licatas decided to renovate the barn and the indoor riding track. They bought five horses and hired a barn manager named Calvin Lewis. When Calvin arrived, they told him that they didn't want to foxhunt and they didn't want to ride in shows; they just wanted to look out their windows and see horses grazing. At this point, Mr. Licata rides only occasionally, but Mrs. Licata gets down to the barn once a week, and in the last couple of months their younger daughter, Heather, who is twelve, has started riding regularly. "I find riding a very prestigious sport, and I'm pleased that the kids want to be a part of it," Mrs. Licata says. "I always thought Virginia was—not Southern like Deep South, but your classy Southern. The people here are very classy, and you know what Charlottesville reminds me of? England." The Licatas recently spent a year in London. "You know how the equestrian is prestigious in England? It's like that."

The Licatas moved to Charlottesville because, unlike Silicon Valley, which they found to be "plastic," Virginia was beautiful and historical—a place to raise their children and put down roots. The Licatas own other homes, and a boat in Palm Beach, but they intend, now, to become a Virginia family, and Quail Ridge to be the home their descendants live in for generations to come. After they moved, they bought a golden retriever and named him Rhett Butler. The brass knocker on their front door reads, "Quail Ridge Farm, est. 1999." Of course, whether Quail Ridge does become an ancestral home will depend on the Licata children. The Licatas have two children besides Heather: Jacqueline, who is fourteen, and Andrew, who has just turned three. Jacqueline is old enough to remember California as a less cliquey and hermetic place than Charlottesville, and is already planning her escape; when she grows up, she wants to live in a mansion in Beverly Hills. Heather seems the



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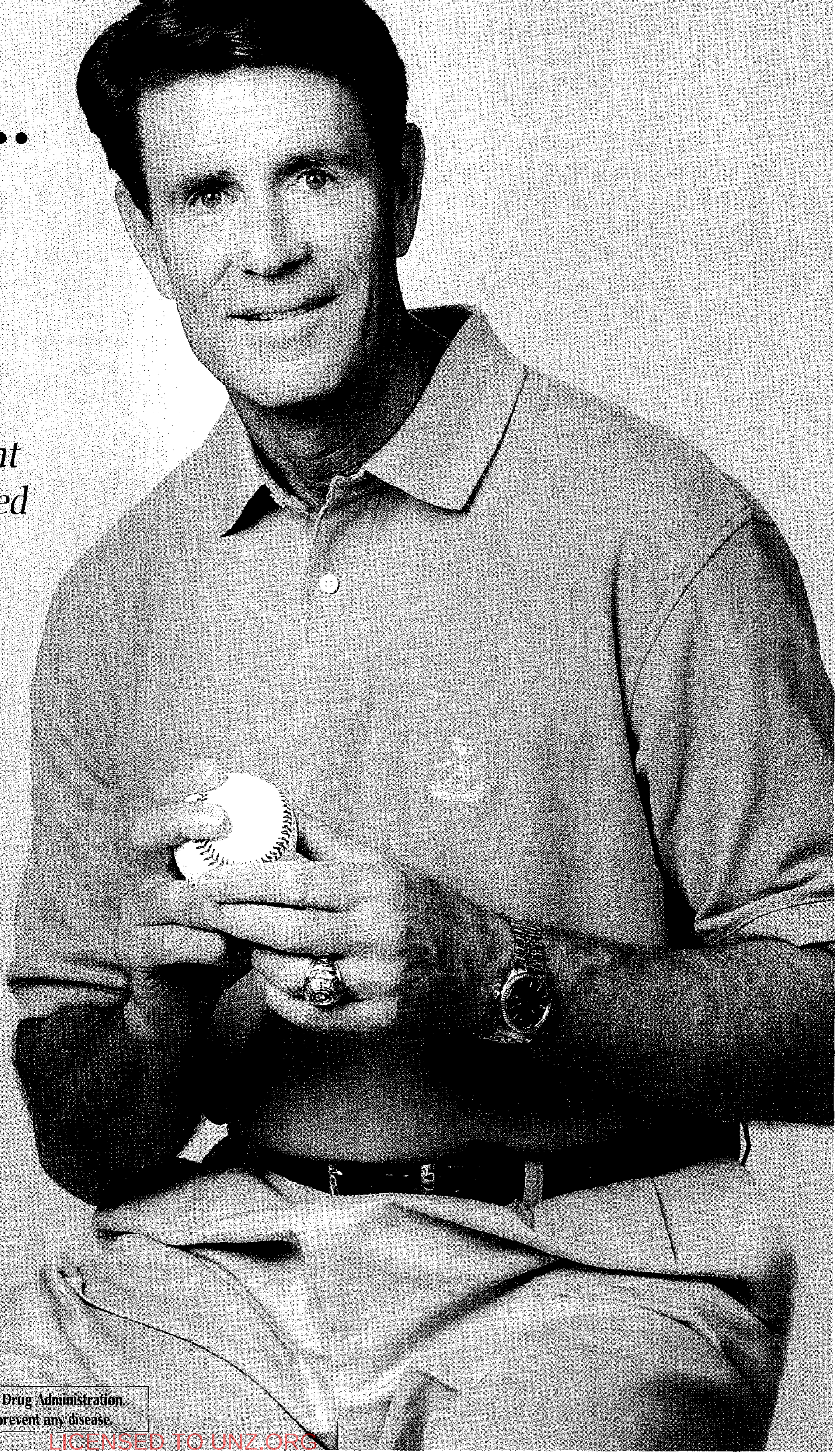

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most likely of the Licata children to put down roots that hold, in part because she has started to ride. Riding makes you part of Charlottesville; it binds you to Virginia.

There was a time when any ambitious mother would have been eager to cultivate horsiness in her children. The purchase of a horse for one's daughter to ride has traditionally been a standard move in the quest for social advancement. Heather attends St. Anne's-Belfield with the Millington girls; it seems to her that almost every girl in her sixth-grade class rode horses. But this is unusual—a sign that Charlottesville is still horse country as other places are not. In certain pockets of the country, riding is still seen as a genteel and gentling enterprise, and horse shows still attract their share of stage mothers ("evil pony moms" is the technical term). But because success now depends in large part on getting into the right college, riding may, in the country at large, be losing its special social lustre. In many schools—even in towns where one would expect riding to be part of the culture, like Greenwich, Connecticut—riding is regarded as a weird fringe activity, not a real sport. None of the most desirable colleges recruit riders in the same way that they recruit football players or tennis players. And if a girl becomes too enamored of her horses she is liable to make plans for college that enable her to ride: she might want to enroll in a lesser school that happens to be close to a barn, for instance, or even, if she is unusually smitten, as Emily was, skip college altogether. As a result, riding has, in many places, become a marginal sport: a throwback to a time when "amateur" was a term of high praise; an activity valued for the cultivation of a hearty, sexless outdoorsiness rather than a drive to perfection.

The day of the horse show, most of the girls arrived at Millington around seven-thirty in the morning, with their mothers in tow to act as grooms. There was a lot to be done. The horses had to be washed, even those that had been washed the day before, because there had been a rainstorm the previous night, and the horses had rolled in the mud. The horses with patches of white on them had to be scrubbed with a special purple shampoo called White 'N Brite. Caitlin, the eleven-year-old, had already bathed her pony, Lilly, by seven-thirty; Lilly stood in the middle of the barn looking like a spent boxer because of a damp towel laid over her withers, which Caitlin had placed there in an effort to make her mane lie down on the correct side of her head. Molly, the ten-year-old, is an enthusiastic pony-bather, a positive maniac with the White 'N Brite, and she had secured the bathing stall early in order to give Sparkles's two white socks a particularly thorough going-over. She looked like Laura Ingalls Wilder at a sleepover: two blond braids, tank top and boxer shorts, and little brown riding boots. Mrs. Duncan, Molly's mother, was in the bathing stall with her, dodging water from the hose.

"Molly, it doesn't look like you've done this side," she said, scratching at Sparkles's flank critically and examining her fingernails.

"I haven't," Molly said.

On the other side of the stable, Caroline was brushing Belle. She was extremely nervous, and looked as though she were about to be sick. Natasha, an eleven-year-old with long braids and wire-rimmed glasses, was down the aisle from Caroline, standing on a milk crate, trying to braid her horse's hair. Natasha's horse, Pie (named after the horse in "National Velvet"), is an Arabian, so Natasha keeps his mane very long and girlish, but for shows she braids it tightly down the back of his head. Caitlin, with Natasha's mother, stood and watched. "Caitlin, hand me a rubber band, quick!" Natasha cried. She dispatched the mane without much trouble, but Pie's forelock was another matter. Braided, it hung thin and unattractive down the middle of his face, like a loose string from a hat. Natasha sighed in despair. "Here, let me try," her mother said. She took the forelock braid, wound it around itself into a little spike, and bound the spike with a rubber band.

"See, it makes him look like a unicorn!" she said cheerfully.

"That looks weird," Natasha said.

A little while later, Mrs. Duncan spotted Caitlin and Molly up on Lilly together. "Molly, get off that horse and get dressed right now!" she hollered. Molly slunk away to change into jodhpurs and a shirt, and then sat on a step, pulling on her special show boots. Mrs. Duncan noticed Molly's shirt collar lying on the barn floor next to her.

"Don't leave this on the floor!" she cried out, swooping down to pick it up. "What's the matter with you?"

"Will someone please calm my mother down?" Molly said.

Up at the ring, a cluster of girls from other stables waited around for the show to start. Though it was only eight-thirty, it was already getting steamy and hot. The grass where the horses were standing was smeared with spit-out bits of chewed carrot. On the other side of the ring, in the shade under the trees, the parents had arranged themselves in groups, with foldup chairs and coolers, and the woman in charge of the food stand was setting out doughnuts and bags of potato chips. Muffin stood by the gate to the riding ring and began calling out numbers for the first event of the show.

A short distance away from Muffin, an elderly woman in white pants and wraparound sunglasses leaned against the fence, watching the riders and making acidic remarks about them to people who walked over to greet her, or to herself, if she was alone. "No guts" was her most frequent comment. This, as Muffin pointed out in a whisper to various passersby, was the Charlottesville legend Elliewood Baxter, seventy-eight years old, a member of the National Show Hunter Hall of Fame. Mrs. Baxter, like Muffin, feels that most girls are chicken these days. "Two-foot jumps," she said, and shook her head in disgust. At noon, it was time for the lead-line class: the event in which very young children are led around the ring on tiny ponies. Andrew Licata was due to compete, and arrived looking wriggly in jodhpurs, navy jacket, tie, and helmet. Calvin led Andrew's pony, Clifford, into the ring, and Mrs. Licata, dressed in an elegant version of riding wear—a white shirt and pebble-colored trousers—recorded their slow progress with a camcorder held up against her sunglasses.

In between events, Natasha stood next to Pie, cleaning out his nostrils with one of her fingers.

"Gross, Natasha!" cried Caitlin's godmother, when she saw what she was doing. "Don't stick your finger up his nose!"

"I'm cleaning it," Natasha explained.

"Lucky you don't have a boy horse, or you'd be cleaning out his weenie," the godmother said.

"I do have a boy horse," Natasha said.

Caitlin's turn in the ring came up. She stood waiting at the gate.

"Caitlin, are you sitting with total grip?" Muffin asked her.

"Yes," Caitlin said.

"Are you mean?"

"I'm mean."

Muffin opened the gate and let her through.

Their events finished and their horses put away, Caitlin and Molly leaned over the fence, half watching an adult event. Neither had done quite as well in the show as she would have liked.

"I think they should have shows where everyone gets a ribbon," Caitlin said, shifting pensively.

Molly looked at her as though that were the stupidest thing she'd ever heard. "That would be no fun at all," she said. "Think about it. Ribbons are supposed to be important and mean something. But if everyone got one it would mean nothing."

"Yeah," Caitlin said, sounding unconvinced. "I guess you're right."

Later in the afternoon, Margaret turned up at the riding ring, along with Emily and Mrs. Kelly. She was having trouble keeping her feet in the stirrups because she had insisted upon wearing a pair of full-length riding boots that she had found in a closet. The boots had belonged to her mother thirty years ago, and the bottoms were worn slippery-smooth. Margaret's first event was announced, and she steered G.G. into the ring. The course went well at first, but then things started to go wrong. She made a small technical mistake ("Margaret, you do that wrong every time," Emily growled from the sidelines), G.G. balked at a jump, and then Margaret started moving about in the saddle in an odd way. "She's lost her stirrup!" Mrs. Kelly exclaimed, and shook her head. Margaret rode out of the ring looking grim. "Oh, well," she said.

There was a wait before Margaret's next event. The air was growing cooler—there had been a brief thunderstorm earlier in the day. The parents of the younger girls, whose events were now over, moved around under the trees on the other side of the ring, collecting sandwich wrappers and soda cans, and folding up wet chairs. While they waited, Mrs. Kelly tried to get her daughter to adjust the position of her knees, but Margaret didn't want to listen. Mrs. Kelly called over Mrs. Baxter for support.

"Stand up," Mrs. Baxter ordered.

Margaret, with a look of suffering but too polite to refuse, rose up in her stirrups.

"This is how it should be," Mrs. Baxter said, grasping Margaret's right calf with her bony hands and forcing it down a couple of inches.

"That's what I was trying to tell you," Mrs. Kelly said to Margaret. "She won't listen to me," she told Mrs. Baxter.

Margaret held the position for a few seconds, and then slumped back down in the saddle. "O.K., I'm going to go now," she said, and headed G.G. off before Mrs. Baxter could make her do anything else.

Mrs. Kelly and Mrs. Baxter watched as Margaret steered G.G. away from a group of Millington girls eating birthday cake, toward an open field. She was going somewhere, presumably, to grind her teeth in peace, by herself. As it turned out, Margaret won her next event and finished the day as champion of the special hunter division. At that moment, though, she was remembering the humiliating stirrup.

"She has a good seat," Mrs. Baxter remarked, watching her go.

"Mrs. Baxter says you have a good seat, Margaret!" Mrs. Kelly called after her. But Margaret either decided to ignore her mother or was too far away to hear, because she didn't turn around. ◆

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The 1.57-mile track marks out an urban comfort zone that's ours to ogle: seagulls lined up on the jetty that once divided the Reservoir in half; the lake-smelling water licking at the shore. In the spring, we glory in the Yoshino cherry blossoms on the east side, and in the new leaves on the oaks and cedars on the west. We bask in the changing light over the Carlyle or the Citicorp or the Chrysler or the Guggenheim or Mount Sinai Hospital or the old twin-towered apartment buildings on the West Side. We breeze past water fountains, benches, escape ramps, and the three nineteenth-century cast-iron rail bridges.

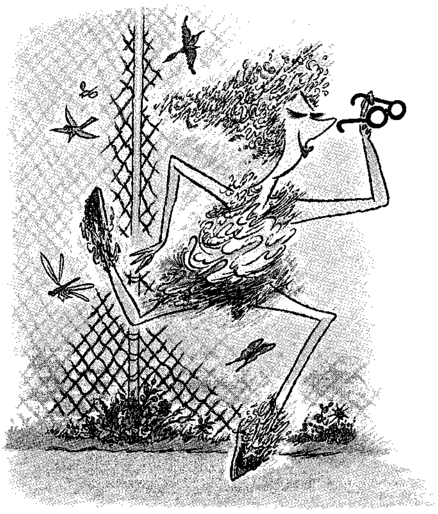
Everybody says hello to Alberto Arroyo, the muscular eighty-five-year-old who was proclaimed "Mayor of Central Park" by Rudolph Giuliani. Arroyo makes his all-day headquarters on a bench near the South Gate House—the set for the demise of Laurence Olivier in "Marathon Man"—at the edge of which he's often doing headstands, bare-chested. He converses while upside down. At the age of nineteen, Arroyo came to New York from Puerto Rico as an amateur boxer. He was told to build up his stamina, so he began to run on the Park's bridle path. One day in 1937, a policeman asked him to get out of the horses' way, so he took to the narrow footpath around the Reservoir, which was then used mainly by maintenance workers. In 1981, it was finally converted into a track.

Our feet pound the recently refurbished surface of crushed bluestone and erosion-fighting stabilizer, for which the Central Park Conservancy managed to raise half a million dollars. The very occasional no-goods and criminals don't stop us. We've got police call boxes, even though they are sometimes, when you need them, non-operative. We fly past the lamps circling the track, which come on automatically when darkness falls. They glow with an eerie green light, reflected from the leaves of the trees.

Now and then we would have a glimpse of Madonna in tank top and very short shorts, jogging around the track with her trainer. For years, we would see Jacqueline Onassis running alone, wearing a brimmed white hat and white gloves on hot days and a black knit cap and black gloves in the cold. When she died, in 1994, the track was supposed to be named for her. A sign went up on the Reservoir fence, but "Onassis" was misspelled and after a few days it was taken down, never to reappear.

Henry Stern, the city's Parks Commissioner, says he doesn't run on the track or anywhere else. "I'm a swimmer," he says. "But I like to see all the people in the parks running around in their underwear."

—Lillian Ross



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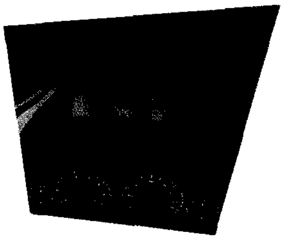

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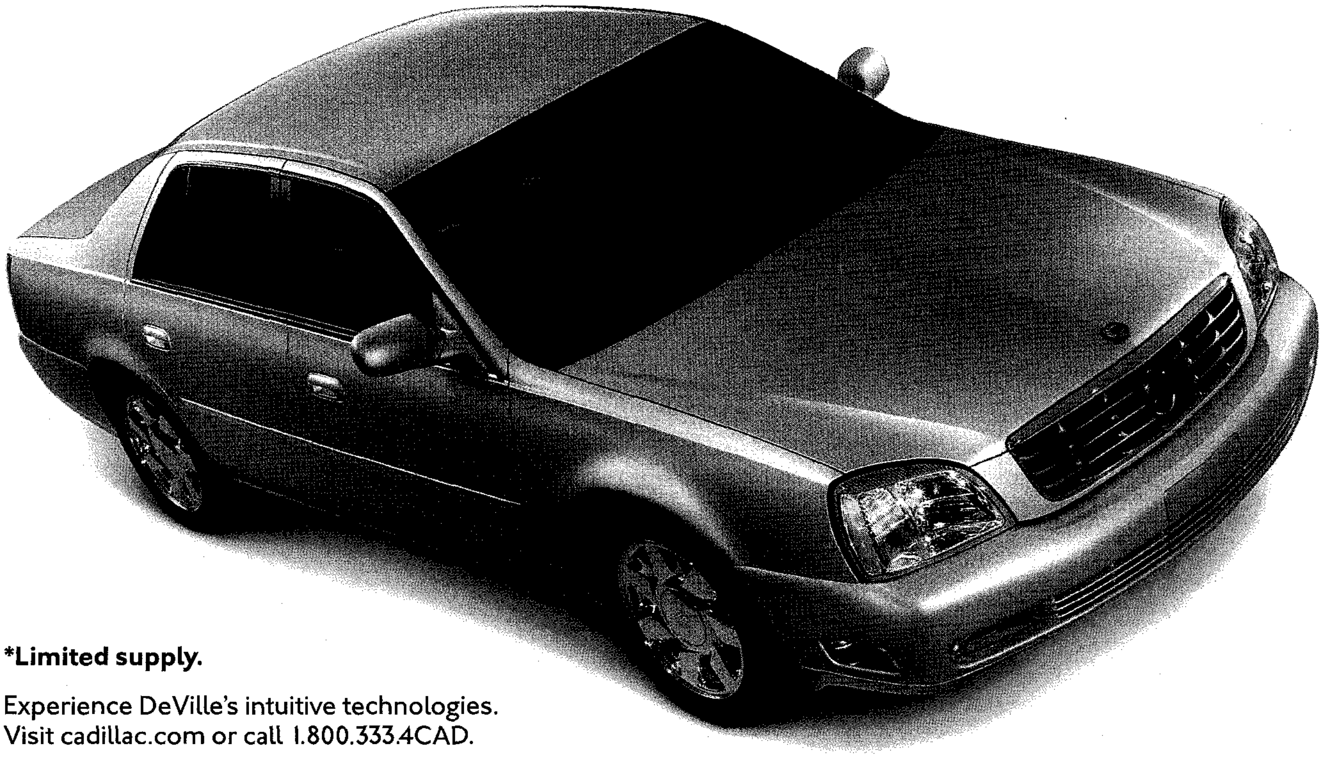

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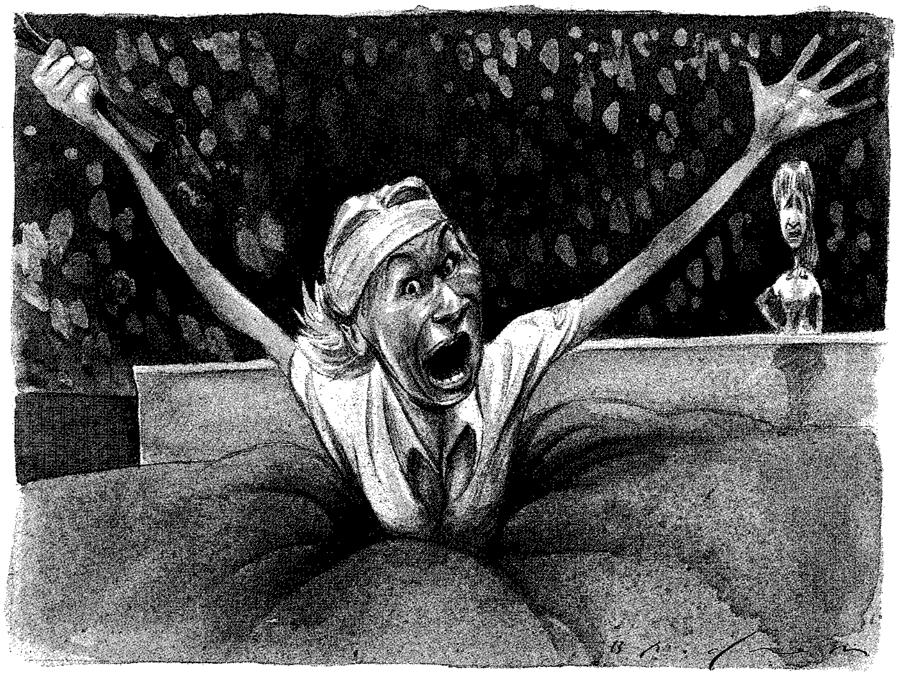
PERFORMANCE STUDIES

THE ART OF FAILURE

Why some people choke and others panic.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL



Jana Novotna's collapse at Wimbledon was as baffling to her as it was to onlookers.

STEVE BRODNER

There was a moment, in the third and deciding set of the 1993 Wimbledon final, when Jana Novotna seemed invincible. She was leading 4–1 and serving at 40–30, meaning that she was one point from winning the game, and just five points from the most coveted championship in tennis. She had just hit a backhand to her opponent, Steffi Graf, that skimmed the net and landed so abruptly on the far side of the court that Graf could only watch, in flat-footed frustration. The stands at Center Court were packed. The Duke and Duchess of Kent were in their customary place in the royal box. Novotna was in white, poised and confident, her blond hair held back with a headband—and then something happened. She served the ball straight into the net. She stopped and steadied herself for the second serve—the toss, the arch of the back—but this time it was worse. Her swing seemed halfhearted, all arm and no legs and torso. Double fault. On the next point, she was slow to react to a high shot by Graf, and badly missed on a forehand volley. At game point, she hit an overhead straight into the net. Instead of 5–1, it was now 4–2. Graf to serve: an easy victory, 4–3. Novotna to serve. She wasn't tossing the ball high enough. Her head was down. Her movements had slowed markedly. She double-faulted once, twice, three times. Pulled wide by a Graf forehand, Novotna inexplicably hit a low, flat shot directly at Graf, instead of a high crosscourt forehand that would have given her time to get back into position: 4–4. Did she suddenly realize how terrifyingly close she was to victory? Did she remember that she had never won a major tournament before? Did she look across the net and see Steffi Graf—Steffi Graf!—the greatest player of her generation?

On the baseline, awaiting Graf's serve, Novotna was now visibly agitated, rocking back and forth, jumping up and down. She talked to herself under her breath. Her eyes darted around the court. Graf took the game at love; Novotna, moving as if in slow motion, did not win a single point: 5–4, Graf. On the sidelines, Novotna wiped her racquet and her face with a towel, and then each finger individually. It was her turn to serve. She missed a routine volley wide, shook her head, talked to herself. She missed her first serve, made the second, then, in the resulting rally, mis-hit a backhand so badly that it sailed off her racquet as if launched into flight. Novotna was unrecognizable, not an élite tennis player but a beginner again. She was crumbling under pressure, but exactly why was as baffling to her as it was to all those looking on. Isn't pressure supposed to bring out the best in us? We try harder. We concentrate harder. We get a boost of adrenaline. We care more about how well we perform. So what was happening to her?

At championship point, Novotna hit a low, cautious, and shallow lob to Graf. Graf answered with an unreturnable overhead smash, and, mercifully, it was over. Stunned, Novotna moved to the net. Graf kissed her twice. At the awards ceremony, the Duchess of Kent handed Novotna the runner-up's trophy, a small silver plate, and whispered something in her ear, and what Novotna had done finally caught up with her. There she was, sweaty and exhausted, looming over the delicate white-haired Duchess in her pearl necklace. The Duchess reached up and pulled her head down onto her shoulder, and Novotna started to sob.

Human beings sometimes falter under pressure. Pilots crash and divers drown. Under the glare of competition, basketball players cannot find the basket and golfers cannot find the pin. When that happens, we say variously that people have "panicked" or, to use the sports colloquialism, "choked." But what do those words mean? Both are pejoratives. To choke or panic is considered to be as bad as to quit. But are all forms of failure equal? And what do the forms in which we fail say about who we are and how we think? We live in an age obsessed with success, with documenting the myriad ways by which talented people overcome challenges and obstacles. There is as much to be learned, though, from documenting the myriad ways in which talented people sometimes fail.

"Choking" sounds like a vague and all-encompassing term, yet it describes a very specific kind of failure. For example, psychologists often use a primitive video game to test motor skills. They'll sit you in front of a computer with a screen that shows four boxes in a row, and a keyboard that has four corresponding buttons in a row. One at a time, x's start to appear in the boxes on the screen, and you are told that every time this happens you are to push the key corresponding to the box. According to Daniel Willingham, a psychologist at the University of Virginia, if you're told ahead of time about the pattern in which those x's will appear, your reaction time in hitting the right key will improve dramatically. You'll play the game very carefully for a few rounds, until you've learned the sequence, and then you'll get faster and faster. Willingham calls this "explicit learning." But suppose you're not told that the x's appear in a regular sequence, and even after playing the game for a while you're not aware that there is a pattern. You'll *still* get faster: you'll learn the sequence unconsciously. Willingham calls that "implicit learning"—learning that takes place outside of awareness. These two learning systems are quite separate, based in different parts of the brain. Willingham says that when you are first taught something—say, how to hit a backhand or an overhead forehand—you think it through in a very deliberate, mechanical manner. But as you get better the implicit system takes over: you start to hit a backhand fluidly, without thinking. The basal ganglia, where implicit learning partially resides, are concerned with force and timing, and when that system kicks in you begin to develop touch and accuracy, the ability to hit a drop shot or place a serve at a hundred miles per hour. "This is something that is going to happen gradually," Willingham says. "You hit several thousand forehands, after a while you may still be attending to it. But not very much. In the end, you don't really notice what your hand is doing at all."

Under conditions of stress, however, the explicit system sometimes takes over. That's what it means to choke. When Jana Novotna faltered at Wimbledon, it was because she began thinking about her shots again. She lost her fluidity, her touch. She double-faulted on her serves and mis-hit her overheads, the shots that demand the greatest sensitivity in force and timing. She seemed like a different person—playing with the slow, cautious deliberation of a beginner—because, in a sense, she *was* a beginner again: she was relying on a learning system that she hadn't used to hit serves and overhead forehands and volleys since she was first taught tennis, as a child. The same thing has happened to Chuck Knoblauch, the New York Yankees' second baseman, who inexplicably has had trouble throwing the ball to first base. Under the stress of playing in front of forty thousand fans at Yankee Stadium, Knoblauch finds himself reverting to explicit mode, throwing like a Little Leaguer again.

Panic is something else altogether. Consider the following account of a scuba-diving accident, recounted to me by Ephimia Morphew, a human-factors specialist at NASA: "It was an open-water certification dive, Monterey Bay, California, about ten years ago. I was nineteen. I'd been diving for two weeks. This was my first time in the open ocean without the instructor. Just my buddy and I. We had to go about forty feet down, to the bottom of the ocean, and do an exercise where we took our regulators out of our mouth, picked up a spare one that we had on our vest, and practiced breathing out of the spare. My buddy did hers. Then it was my turn. I removed my regulator. I lifted up my secondary regulator. I put it in my mouth, exhaled, to clear the lines, and then I inhaled, and, to my surprise, it was water. I inhaled water. Then the hose that connected that mouthpiece to my tank, my air source, came unlatched and air from the hose came exploding into my face.

"Right away, my hand reached out for my partner's air supply, as if I was going to rip it out. It was without thought. It was a physiological response. My eyes are seeing my hand do something irresponsible. I'm fighting with myself. *Don't do it.* Then I searched my mind for what I could

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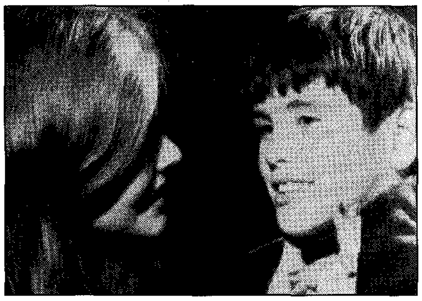

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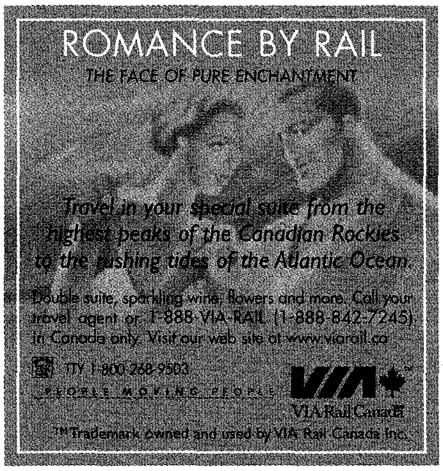
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do. And nothing came to mind. All I could remember was one thing: If you can't take care of yourself, let your buddy take care of you. I let my hand fall back to my side, and I just stood there."

This is a textbook example of panic. In that moment, Morphew stopped thinking. She forgot that she had another source of air, one that worked perfectly well and that, moments before, she had taken out of her mouth. She forgot that her partner had a working air supply as well, which could easily be shared, and she forgot that grabbing her partner's regulator would imperil both of them. All she had was her most basic instinct: *get air.* Stress wipes out short-term memory. People with lots of experience tend not to panic, because when the stress suppresses their short-term memory they still have some residue of experience to draw on. But what did a novice like Morphew have? *I searched my mind for what I could do. And nothing came to mind.*

Panic also causes what psychologists call perceptual narrowing. In one study, from the early seventies, a group of subjects were asked to perform a visual-acuity task while undergoing what they thought was a sixty-foot dive in a pressure chamber. At the same time, they were asked to push a button whenever they saw a small light flash on and off in their peripheral vision. The subjects in the pressure chamber had much higher heart rates than the control group, indicating that they were under stress. That stress didn't affect their accuracy at the visual-acuity task, but they were only half as good as the control group at picking up the peripheral light. "You tend to focus or obsess on one thing," Morphew says. "There's a famous airplane example, where the landing light went off, and the pilots had no way of knowing if the landing gear was down. The pilots were so focussed on that light that no one noticed the autopilot had been disengaged, and they crashed the plane." Morphew reached for her buddy's air supply because it was the only air supply she could see.

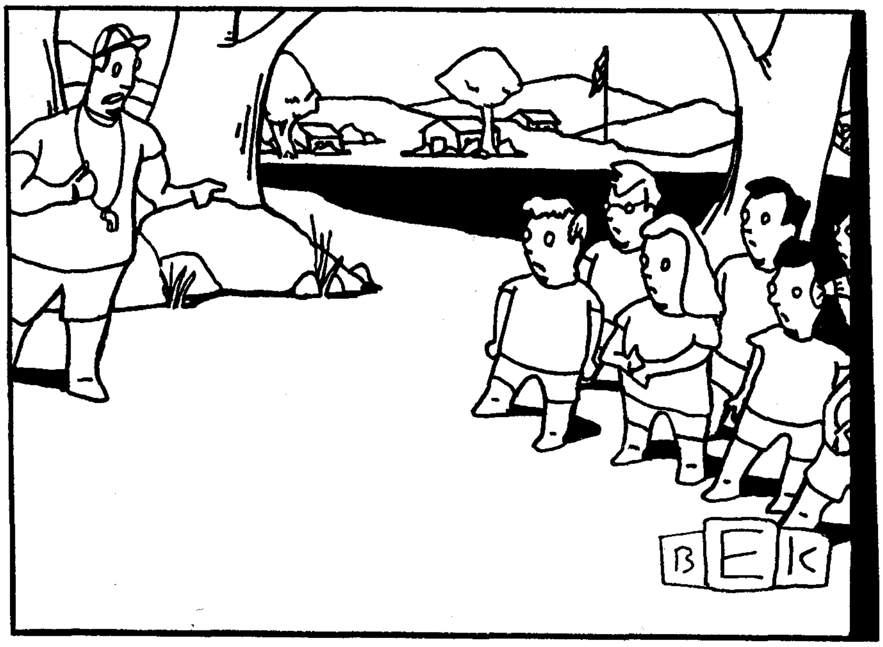
Panic, in this sense, is the opposite of choking. Choking is about thinking too much. Panic is about thinking too little. Choking is about loss of instinct. Panic is reversion to instinct. They may look the same, but they are worlds apart.

Why does this distinction matter? In some instances, it doesn't much. If you lose a close tennis match, it's of little moment whether you choked or panicked; either way, you lost. But there are clearly cases when *how* failure happens is central to understanding *why* failure happens.

Take the plane crash in which John F. Kennedy, Jr., was killed last summer. The details of the flight are well known. On a Friday evening last July, Kennedy took off with his wife and sister-in-law for Martha's Vineyard. The night was hazy, and Kennedy flew along the Connecticut coastline, using the trail of lights below him as a guide. At Westerly, Rhode Island, he left the shoreline, heading straight out over Rhode Island Sound, and at that point, apparently disoriented by the darkness and haze, he began a series of curious maneuvers: He banked his plane to the right, farther out into the ocean, and then to the left. He climbed and descended. He sped up and slowed down. Just a few miles from his destination, Kennedy lost control of the plane, and it crashed into the ocean.

Kennedy's mistake, in technical terms, was that he failed to keep his wings level. That was critical, because when a plane banks to one side it begins to turn and its wings lose some of their vertical lift. Left unchecked, this process accelerates. The angle of the bank increases, the turn gets sharper and sharper, and the plane starts to dive toward the ground in an ever-narrowing corkscrew. Pilots call this the graveyard spiral. And why didn't Kennedy stop the dive? Because, in times of low visibility and high stress, keeping your wings level—indeed, even knowing whether you are in a graveyard spiral—turns out to be surprisingly difficult. Kennedy failed under pressure.

Had Kennedy been flying during the day or with a clear moon, he would have been fine. If you are the pilot, looking straight ahead from the cockpit, the angle of your wings will be obvious from the straight line of the horizon in front of you. But when it's dark outside the horizon disappears. There is no exter-

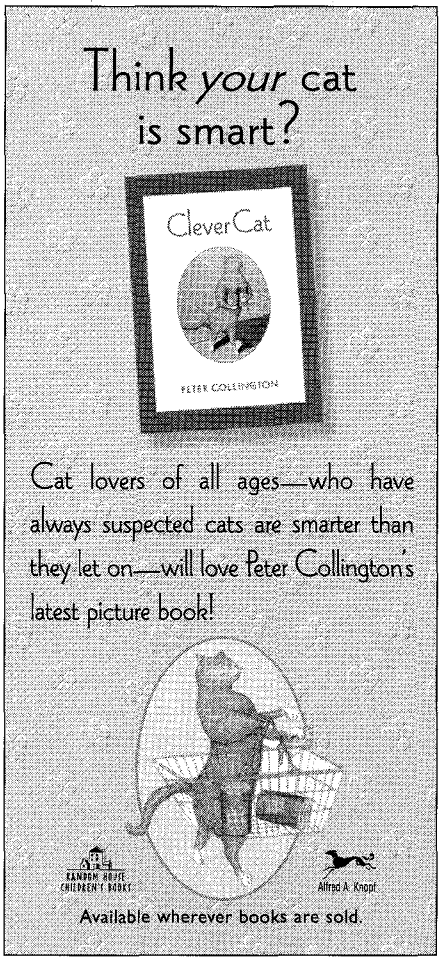


"And I don't want to hear any of this 'There are no cameras following us so what's the point?' stuff."

• •

nal measure of the plane's bank. On the ground, we know whether we are level even when it's dark, because of the motion-sensing mechanisms in the inner ear. In a spiral dive, though, the effect of the plane's G-force on the inner ear means that the pilot *feels* perfectly level even if his plane is not. Similarly, when you are in a jetliner that is banking at thirty degrees after takeoff, the book on your neighbor's lap does not slide into your lap, nor will a pen on the floor roll toward the "down" side of the plane. The physics of flying is such that an airplane in the midst of a turn always feels perfectly level to someone inside the cabin.

This is a difficult notion, and to understand it I went flying with William Langewiesche, the author of a superb book on flying, "Inside the Sky." We met at San Jose Airport, in the jet center where the Silicon Valley billionaires keep their private planes. Langewiesche is a rugged man in his forties, deeply tanned, and handsome in the way that pilots (at least since the movie "The Right Stuff") are supposed to be. We took off at dusk, heading out toward Monterey Bay, until we had left the lights of the coast behind and night had erased the horizon. Langewiesche let the plane bank gently to the left. He took his hands off the stick. The sky told me nothing now, so I concentrated on the instruments. The nose of the plane was dropping. The gyroscope told me that we were banking, first fifteen, then thirty, then forty-five degrees. "We're in a spiral dive," Langewiesche said calmly. Our airspeed was steadily accelerating, from a hundred and eighty to a hundred and ninety to two hundred knots. The needle on the altimeter was moving down. The plane was dropping like a stone, at three thousand feet per minute. I could hear, faintly, a slight increase in the hum of the engine, and the wind noise as we picked up speed. But if Langewiesche and I had been talking I would have caught none of that. Had the cabin been unpressurized, my ears might have popped, particularly as we went into the steep part of the dive. But beyond that? Nothing at all. In a spiral dive, the G-load—the force of inertia—is normal. As Langewiesche puts it, the plane *likes* to spiral-dive. The total time elapsed since we started diving was no more than six or seven seconds. Suddenly, Langewiesche straightened the wings and pulled back on the stick to get the nose of the plane up, break-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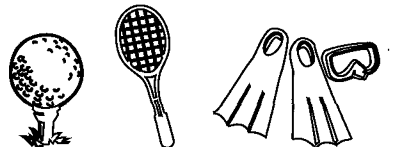
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ing out of the dive. Only now did I feel the full force of the G-load, pushing me back in my seat. "You feel no G-load in a bank," Langewiesche said. "There's nothing more confusing for the uninitiated."

I asked Langewiesche how much longer we could have fallen. "Within five seconds, we would have exceeded the limits of the airplane," he replied, by which he meant that the force of trying to pull out of the dive would have broken the plane into pieces. I looked away from the instruments and asked Langewiesche to spiral-dive again, this time without telling me. I sat and waited. I was about to tell Langewiesche that he could start diving anytime, when, suddenly, I was thrown back in my chair. "We just lost a thousand feet," he said.

This inability to sense, experientially, what your plane is doing is what makes night flying so stressful. And this was the stress that Kennedy must have felt when he turned out across the water at Westerly, leaving the guiding lights of the Connecticut coastline behind him. A pilot who flew into Nantucket that night told the National Transportation Safety Board that when he descended over Martha's Vineyard he looked down and there was "nothing to see. There was no horizon and no light. . . . I thought the island might [have] suffered a power failure." Kennedy was now blind, in every sense, and he must have known the danger he was in. He had very little experience in flying strictly by instruments. Most of the time when he had flown up to the Vineyard the horizon or lights had still been visible. That strange, final sequence of maneuvers was Kennedy's frantic search for a clearing in the haze. He was trying to pick up the lights of Martha's Vineyard, to restore the lost horizon. Between the lines of the National Transportation Safety Board's report on the crash, you can almost feel his desperation:

> About 2138 the target began a right turn in a southerly direction. About 30 seconds later, the target stopped its descent at 2200 feet and began a climb that lasted another 30 seconds. During this period of time, the target stopped the turn, and the airspeed decreased to about 153 KIAS. About 2139, the target leveled off at 2500 feet and flew in a southeasterly direction. About 50 seconds later, the target entered a left turn and climbed to 2600 feet. As the target continued in the left turn, it began a descent that reached a rate of about 900 fpm.

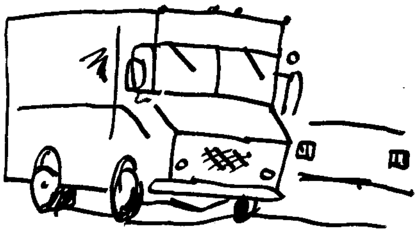
But was he choking or panicking? Here the distinction between those two states is critical. Had he choked, he would have reverted to the mode of explicit learning. His movements in the cockpit would have become markedly slower and less fluid. He would have gone back to the mechanical, self-conscious application of the lessons he had first received as a pilot—and that might have been a good thing. Kennedy *needed* to think, to concentrate on his instruments, to break away from the instinctive flying that served him when he had a visible horizon.

But instead, from all appearances, he panicked. At the moment when he needed to remember the lessons he had been taught about instrument flying, his mind—like Morphew's when she was underwater—must have gone blank. Instead of reviewing the instruments, he seems to have been focussed on one question: Where are the lights of Martha's Vineyard? His gyroscope and his other instruments may well have become as invisible as the peripheral lights in the underwater-panic experiments. He had fallen back on his instincts—on the way the plane *felt*—and in the dark, of course, instinct can tell you nothing. The N.T.S.B. report says that the last time the Piper's wings were level was seven seconds past 9:40, and the plane hit the water at about 9:41, so the critical period here was less than sixty seconds. At twenty-five seconds past the minute, the plane was tilted at an angle greater than forty-five degrees. Inside the cockpit it would have felt normal. At some point, Kennedy must have heard the rising wind outside, or the roar of the engine as it picked up speed. Again, relying on instinct, he might have pulled back on the stick, trying to raise the nose of the plane. But pulling back on the stick without first levelling the wings only makes the spiral tighter and the problem worse. It's also possible that Kennedy did nothing at all, and that he was frozen at the controls, still frantically searching for the lights of the Vineyard, when his plane hit the water.

Sometimes pilots don't even try to make it out of a spiral dive. Langewiesche calls that "one G all the way down."

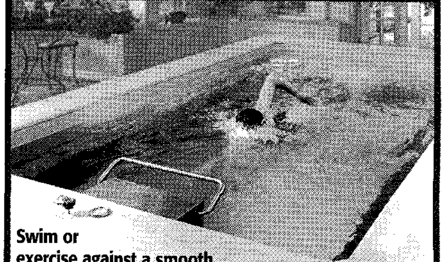
What happened to Kennedy that night illustrates a second major difference between panicking and choking. Panicking is conventional failure, of the sort we tacitly understand. Kennedy panicked because he didn't know enough about instrument flying. If he'd had another year in the air, he might not have panicked, and that fits with what we believe—that performance ought to improve with experience, and that pressure is an obstacle that the diligent can overcome. But choking makes little intuitive sense. Novotna's problem wasn't lack of diligence; she was as superbly conditioned and schooled as anyone on the tennis tour. And what did experience do for her? In 1995, in the third round of the French Open, Novotna choked even more spectacularly than she had against Graf, losing to Chanda Rubin after surrendering a 5–0 lead in the third set. There seems little doubt that part of the reason for her collapse against Rubin was her collapse against Graf—that the second failure built on the first, making it possible for her to be up 5–0 in the third set and yet entertain the thought *I can still lose.* If panicking is conventional failure, choking is paradoxical failure.

Claude Steele, a psychologist at Stanford University, and his colleagues have done a number of experiments in recent years looking at how certain groups perform under pressure, and their findings go to the heart of what is so strange about choking. Steele and Joshua Aronson found that when they gave a group of Stanford undergraduates a standardized test and told them that it was a measure of their intellectual ability, the white students did much better than their black counterparts. But when the same test was presented simply as an abstract laboratory tool, with no relevance to ability, the scores of blacks and whites were virtually identical. Steele and Aronson attribute this disparity to what they call "stereotype threat": when black students are put into a situation where they are directly confronted with a stereotype about their group—in this case, one having to do with intelligence—the resulting pressure causes their performance to suffer.



Steele and others have found stereotype threat at work in any situation where groups are depicted in negative ways. Give a group of qualified women a math test and tell them it will measure their quantitative ability and they'll do much worse than equally skilled men will; present the same test simply as a research tool and they'll do just as well as the men. Or consider a handful of experiments conducted by one of Steele's former graduate students, Julio Garcia, a professor at Tufts University. Garcia gathered together a group of white, athletic students and had a white instructor lead them through a series of physical tests: to jump as high as they could, to do a standing broad jump, and to see how many pushups they could do in twenty seconds. The instructor then asked them to do the tests a second time, and, as you'd expect, Garcia found that the students did a little better on each of the tasks the second time around. Then Garcia ran a second group of students through the tests, this time replacing the instructor between the first and second trials with an African-American. Now the white students ceased to improve on their vertical leaps. He did the experiment again, only this time he replaced the white instructor with a black instructor who was much taller and heavier than the previous black instructor. In this trial, the white students actually jumped less high than they had the first time around. Their performance on the pushups, though, was unchanged in each of the conditions. There is no stereotype, after all, that suggests that whites can't do as many pushups as blacks. The task that was affected was the vertical leap, because of what our culture says: *white men can't jump.*

It doesn't come as news, of course, that black students aren't as good at test-taking as white students, or that white students aren't as good at jumping as black students. The problem is that



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we've always assumed that this kind of failure under pressure is panic. What is it we tell underperforming athletes and students? The same thing we tell novice pilots or scuba divers: to work harder, to buckle down, to take the tests of their ability more seriously. But Steele says that when you look at the way black or female students perform under stereotype threat you don't see the wild guessing of a panicked test taker. "What you tend to see is carefulness and second-guessing," he explains. "When you go and interview them, you have the sense that when they are in the stereotype-threat condition they say to themselves, 'Look, I'm going to be careful here. I'm not going to mess things up.' Then, after having decided to take that strategy, they calm down and go through the test. But that's not the way to succeed on a standardized test. The more you do that, the more you will get away from the intuitions that help you, the quick processing. They think they did well, and they are trying to do well. But they are not." This is choking, not panicking. Garcia's athletes and Steele's students are like Novotna, not Kennedy. They failed because they were good at what they did: only those who care about how well they perform ever feel the pressure of stereotype threat. The usual prescription for failure—to work harder and take the test more seriously—would only make their problems worse.

That is a hard lesson to grasp, but harder still is the fact that choking requires us to concern ourselves less with the performer and more with the situation in which the performance occurs. Novotna herself could do nothing to prevent her collapse against Graf. The only thing that could have saved her is if—at that critical moment in the third set—the television cameras had been turned off, the Duke and Duchess had gone home, and the spectators had been told to wait outside. In sports, of course, you can't do that. Choking is a central part of the drama of athletic competition, because the spectators *have* to be there—and the ability to overcome the pressure of the spectators is part of what it means to be a champion. But the same ruthless inflexibility need not govern the rest of our lives. We have to learn that sometimes a poor performance reflects not the innate ability of the performer but the complexion of the audience; and that sometimes a poor test score is the sign not of a poor student but of a good one.

Through the first three rounds of the 1996 Masters golf tournament, Greg Norman held a seemingly insurmountable lead over his nearest rival, the Englishman Nick Faldo. He was the best player in the world. His nickname was the Shark. He didn't saunter down the fairways; he stalked the course, blond and broad-shouldered, his caddy behind him, struggling to keep up. But then came the ninth hole on the tournament's final day. Norman was paired with Faldo, and the two hit their first shots well. They were now facing the green. In front of the pin, there was a steep slope, so that any ball hit short would come rolling back down the hill into oblivion. Faldo shot first, and the ball landed safely long, well past the cup.

Norman was next. He stood over the ball. "The one thing you guard against here is short," the announcer said, stating the obvious. Norman swung and then froze, his club in midair, following the ball in flight. It was short. Norman watched, stone-faced, as the ball rolled thirty yards back down the hill, and with that error something inside of him broke.

At the tenth hole, he hooked the ball to the left, hit his third shot well past the cup, and missed a makable putt. At eleven, Norman had a three-and-a-half-foot putt for par—the kind he had been making all week. He shook out his hands and legs before grasping the club, trying to relax. He missed: his third straight bogey. At twelve, Norman hit the ball straight into the water. At thirteen, he hit it into a patch of pine needles. At sixteen, his movements were so mechanical and out of synch that, when he swung, his hips spun out ahead of his body and the ball sailed into another pond. At that, he took his club and made a frustrated scythelike motion through the grass, because what had been obvious for twenty minutes was now official: he had fumbled away the chance of a lifetime.

Faldo had begun the day six strokes behind Norman. By the time the two started their slow walk to the eighteenth hole, through the throng of spectators, Faldo had a four-stroke lead. But he took those final steps quietly, giving only the smallest of nods, keeping his head low. He understood what had happened on the greens and fairways that day. And he was bound by the particular etiquette of choking, the understanding that what he had earned was something less than a victory and what Norman had suffered was something less than a defeat.

When it was all over, Faldo wrapped his arms around Norman. "I don't know what to say—I just want to give you a hug," he whispered, and then he said the only thing you can say to a choker: "I feel horrible about what happened. I'm so sorry." With that, the two men began to cry. ♦

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THE HARDEST TEST

Drugs and the Tour de France.

BY JULIAN BARNES

In the first week of July, as the Tour de France meandered joustingly down the flat western side of the country, I visited a small cycling museum in the mid-Wales spa town of Llandrindod Wells. Halfway around this testament to curatorial obsession, among the velocipedes and the 1896 Crypto Front Wheel Drivers, the passionate arrangements of cable clips and repair-outfit tins, there is a small display window containing the vestimentary leavings of the British cyclist Tom Simpson. A grubby white jersey with zippered neck, maker's emblem (Le Coq Sportif), big Union Jacks on each shoulder, and discolored glue bands across the thorax indicating the removal of perhaps a sponsor's name, perhaps the colored stripes awarded for some previous triumph. Black trunks with "PEUGEOT" embroidered in surprisingly delicate white stitchwork across the left thigh. Chamois-palmed string-backed cycling gloves with big white press buttons at the back of the wrist, and the fingers mittenishly cut off at the first joint. This is what Simpson had been wearing on July 13, 1967, during the thirteenth stage of the Tour, when he collapsed on Mont Ventoux, the highest of the Provençal Alps. Thirty-three years to the day of his death, the 2000 Tour was due to climb the mountain again.

Back in 1962, Simpson had been the first British rider ever to wear the race leader's yellow jersey (only three other Britons have acquired it since); he had been World Champion in 1965, and in 1967 had already won Paris-Nice, the early-season classic flatteringly known as the Race to the Sun. He was a strong, gutsy cyclist, popular with fellow-riders, the press, and the public. He also played up cheerfully to the Englishman's image, posing emblematically with bowler hat and furled umbrella. A memorial to him near the summit of Mont Ventoux lists his achievements as "Olympic Medallist, World Champion, British Sporting Ambassador," and the last of these three is no sentimental piety. If sport increasingly becomes a focus for brain-dead chauvinism, it also, at its best, acts as a solvent, transcending national identity and raising the sport, and the sportsperson, above such concerns. Simpson was one of those transplanted stars who won over a foreign public, and his martyrish suffering on a French mountain added to the myth. His name is still widely remembered in France—more so, probably, than in Britain.

Mont Ventoux, which rises to just over nineteen hundred metres, doesn't appear especially sharp-sided or rebarbative from a distance. For those on foot, it is comparatively welcoming: Petrarch climbed it with his brother and two servants in 1336, and a local hiking firm offers nighttime ascents for the reasonably fit with a promise of spectacular sunrises. For the Tour rider, it is another matter. Other mountains in the race may be higher or steeper but seem more friendly, or more functional—or at least more routine, being climbed more often. The Ventoux is a one-off. Its appearance is perpetually wintry: the top few hundred metres are covered with a whitish scree, giving the illusion of a snowbound summit even in high summer. A few amateur botanists may scour its slopes for polar flora (the Spitzbergen saxifrage, the Greenland poppy), but there is little other recreational activity on offer here. The Ventoux is just a bleak and hulking mountain with an observatory at the top. There is no reason for going up it except that the Tour planners order you to go up it. Cyclists fear and hate the place, while the fact that the Tour, which follows a different route every year, makes the ascent only once every five years or so increases its mys-

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The British cyclist Tom Simpson shortly before his death, in 1967.

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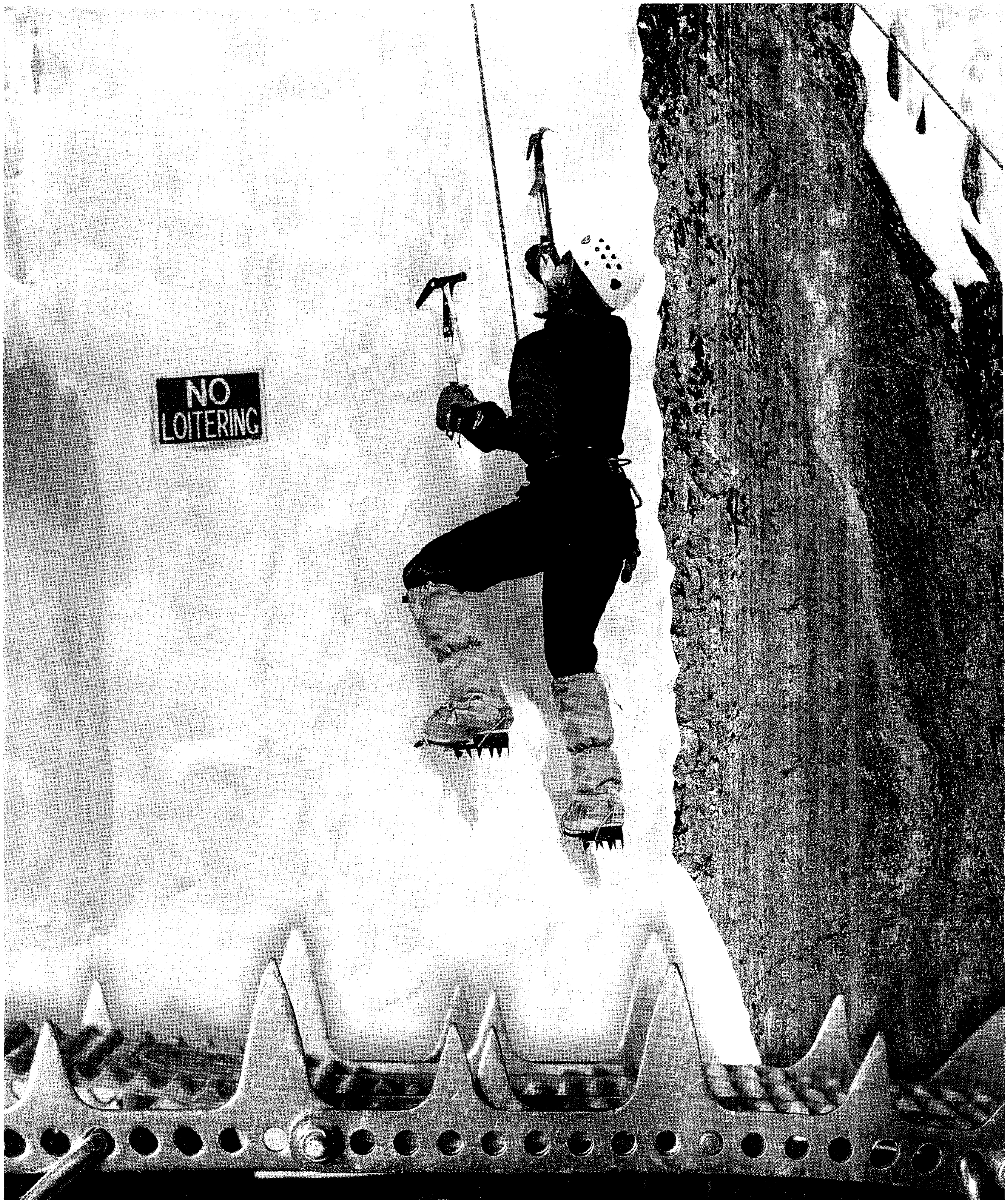

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tique, builds its broodingness. The American Lance Armstrong called the Tour de France "a contest in purposeless suffering" in his autobiography, "It's Not About the Bike"; the climb of Mont Ventoux epitomizes this implacably.

When the tree line runs out, there is nothing up there but you and the weather, which is violent and capricious. The story goes that on the day Simpson died a thermometer in a café halfway up the mountain exploded when registering fifty-four degrees centigrade (officially, the temperature was in the nineties Fahrenheit). But there is one thing cyclists fear as much as heat: wind. One task of the support riders in a team is to protect their leader from the wind; they cluster around him on windy stretches like worker bees protecting the queen. (This abnegation is also self-interested, for in the Tour the monarch is also a cash crop, his prize money being divided among the team at the race's end.) But on the mountains, where the weaker fall away, the top riders are often left to themselves, unprotected. And the Ventoux, where the mistral mixes with the tramontane, is officially the windiest place on earth: in February, 1967, the world gusting record was set there, at three hundred and twenty kilometres per hour. Popular etymology derives Ventoux from *vent*, "wind," making it Windy Mountain; appropriate but erroneous. The proper etymology—*vinturi*, from the Ligurian root *ven*, meaning mountain—is duller but perhaps truer. Mount Mountain: a place to make bikers feel they're climbing not one peak but two; a place to give bikers double vision.

As I drove toward the mountain the day before the Tour climbed it, there was cloud hanging over its summit, but otherwise the day felt clear, if breezy. This changed quickly on the upper slopes. Cloud covered the top fifteen hundred feet or so; visibility dropped to a few yards; the wind rose. By the side of the road, hardy fans who had arrived early to claim their places were double-chocking the wheels of their camper vans and piling stones halfway up the rims for extra security. The Simpson memorial—the profile of a crouched rider set on a granite slab—is placed a kilometre and a half from the summit on the eastern side. It has a handsome simplicity subverted by the clutter of heartfelt junk laid on the steps in front of it. Some mourners have simply added a large white stone from the nearby slope; but more have overlaid the site with a jumble of cycling castoffs—water bottles, logoed caps, T-shirts, energy bars, a saddle, a couple of tires, a symbolic broken wheel. It is part Jewish grave, part the tumultuous altar of some popular if dubious Catholic saint. All this was difficult to take in because the cold and the wind were pulling so much water into my eyes. It felt locally strange to be attempting some vague act of homage while being barely able to stand; more largely strange in that the winds—gusting at more than a hundred and fifty kilometres per hour that day—seemed to have absolutely no effect in dispersing the cloud. After a few minutes, I got back into the car and drove down the mountain to Bédoin, where I found that the bones of my fingers and toes still ached from the cold. I craved a whiskey. An hour or so later, snow fell on the summit.

When Petrarch set out on his ascent, he encountered, like any modern journalist, a quotable peasant who just happened to have climbed the mountain himself fifty years previously. However, the fellow "had got for his pains nothing except fatigue and regret, and clothes and body torn by the rocks and briars. No one, so far as he or his companions knew, had ever tried the ascent before or after him." Petrarch's brother headed for the summit by the most direct, and therefore hardest, route; while the poet, being wilier or lazier, kept trying to find an easier way. Each time the trail would prove false, and this shameful halfheartedness brought Ovid to mind. "To wish is little: we must long with the utmost eagerness to gain our end." For Petrarch, the excursion up the Ventoux turned out to be a metaphor of the spiritual journey: it is uphill all the way, and there are no shortcuts.

But bikers, like hikers, are always looking for shortcuts. Next to the Simpson display window in Llandrindod Wells, I saw a publicity photograph of Mrs. Billie Dovey, a prewar cycling belle promoted as "the Rudge-Whitworth 'Keep Fit Girl.'" This smiling, bespectacled icon pedals toward us in sepia innocence, an advertisement for comradely physical improvement, the healthy life, *mens sana in corpore sano*. But, as in most

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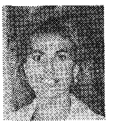

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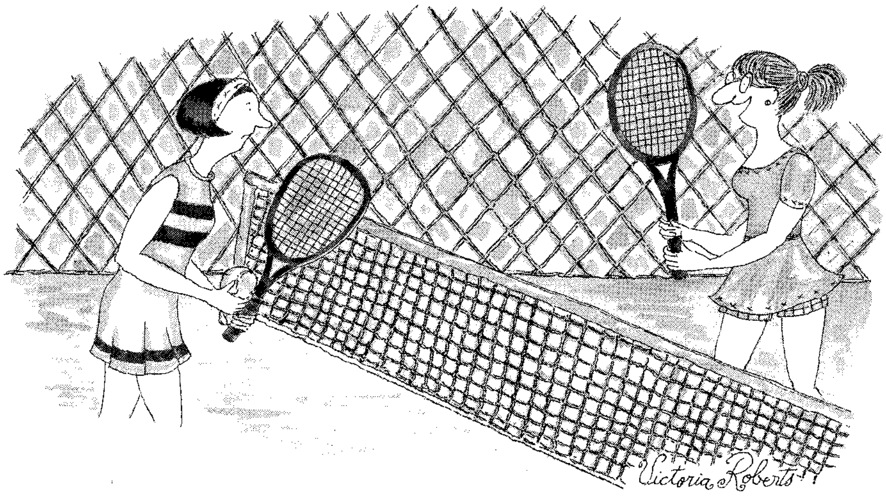


"I'll be the headlights, you be the deer."

sports, the higher and the more professional you go, the less Corinthian it becomes. Various factors led to Simpson's death on July 13, 1967: the heat, the mountain, the lack of support (he was riding with a weak national team), the pressure on a rider approaching thirty to win the Tour before his time passed. But a prime cause of Simpson's death on Mont Ventoux was the use of amphetamines, which helped his body ignore sense, and made his last words a dying plea to be put back on his bike. Traces of amphetamines were found in Simpson's body and among his kit. Speed kills, the moralists asserted. But Simpson's case was hardly egregious. Amphetamines—famously used to keep bomber crews alert on long missions—were widely consumed by cyclists in the postwar years. Their explosive effect caused them to be nicknamed *la bomba* in Italian, *la bombe* in French, and the somewhat more sinister *atoom* in Dutch. In the late fifties, the legendary Italian rider Fausto Coppi was asked on French radio if all riders took *la bomba*. "Yes," he replied, "and those who claim the opposite aren't worth talking to about cycling." "So did you take *la bomba*?" the interviewer continued. "Yes, whenever it was necessary." "And when was it necessary?" "Practically all the time." The five-time Tour winner Jacques Anquetil told the French sports daily *L'Équipe* in the year Simpson died, "You'd have to be an imbecile or a hypocrite to imagine that a professional cyclist who rides 235 days a year can hold himself together without stimulants."

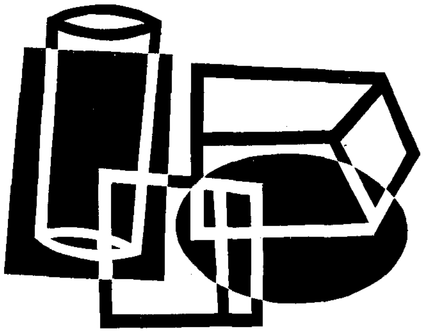
Benjo Maso, the Dutch sociologist and historian of cycling, enlightened and depressed me about the prehistory of drug use. In the early days, this meant mainly strychnine, cocaine, and morphine, though there were also folksier pick-me-ups, like bull's blood and the crushed testicles of wild animals. An Englishman named Linton died from his exertions in the Bordeaux-Paris race of 1896; his death was generally attributed to the use of drugs, probably morphine. In the nineteen-twenties, riders used "incredible amounts of booze." Maso cited another Bordeaux-Paris race (the event called for herculean stamina, being run in a single stretch, right through the night), in which the allowance per man in one team was a bottle of eau-de-vie, some port, some white wine, and some champagne. These alcoholic habits continued; there are photos of Tour de France riders refuelling in bars and cafés. At Bédoin, where the Ventoux climb begins, Simpson is said to have complicated his body by stopping off with other riders for a drink; rumor has served him with a whiskey and a pastis. This may sound foolishly self-defeating now, but at the time Tour regulations permitted the riders' support staff to give them liquid only at certain intervals; moreover, there was a general belief among the *peloton* (the main bunch of riders) that alcohol taken during the course of an event did you no harm, since it was quickly sweated out. Athletes and alcohol: I remembered that Captain Webb, the first person to swim the English Channel, in 1875, had washed his breakfast down that day with claret, and sustained himself on the way to Calais with brandy and "strong old ale." Has it always been going on, I asked Maso. "Well, they had breath tests for alcohol in the ancient Olympic games," he replied.

This all seems less shocking when you look at the terrain and remember that the riders have to cover three thousand six hundred and thirty kilometres in three weeks, with only two rest days. The Tour de France is easily the most punishing endurance event in the athletic world. A triathlon, by comparison, is a fun run. (Armstrong was a triathlete before becoming a professional cyclist.) The British rider David Millar, a Tour débutant this year, summed up a day that for him had consisted of eight and a half hours in the saddle, followed by a two-hour traffic jam to get to a hotel where the restaurant had closed and he was unable even to get a massage: "Sadomasochism," he said. If driving down the Ventoux to Bédoin leaves you croaking for a whiskey, you'd certainly need one if asked to cycle up it; even the Rudge-Whitworth Keep Fit Girl might take a snifter. The nearest equivalent to her on the Tour de France was perhaps Gino Bartali, Coppi's great rival, who won the race twice, in 1938 and 1948. "I didn't need drugs," he once said. "Faith in the Madonna kept me from feeling fatigue and pain." But such Petrarchianism was rare; for many riders miracles existed only in capsule form. With amphetamines, there was even a certain rough justice: they helped get you up the mountain one day but exacted their price the next. Both Coppi and Simpson were among riders known for their *défaillances*, their days of weakness; though doubtless climbing the Ventoux without chemical help would leave you pretty tired the next day anyway.

Such speedy, boozy days now seem almost innocent; and they were innocent in that Coppi's use of *la bomba* didn't contravene cycling regulations of the day—amphetamines were declared illegal only in the mid-sixties. The quantum leap came when drugs designed to stimulate were replaced—or, in real terms, joined—by drugs designed to fortify, notably growth hormones and EPO (erythropoietin), the synthetic version of a naturally occurring hormone which is often prescribed for dialysis and chemotherapy patients. Instead of helping suppress pain and giving you the illusion that you were stronger than you actually were, the new drugs really did make you stronger. In addition, Maso explained, "There are no bad days, as with amphetamines." From the early to the mid-nineties, EPO became the drug of choice among many professional cyclists. Its function is to raise the red-blood-cell count, which sends more oxygen to the tissues, thus increasing your endurance and your powers of recovery. If there are two riders of equal ability, the one taking EPO will beat the one who remains clean; it is as simple as that. EPO was banned in 1990, even though its actual presence could not be proved; only its suspicious consequences were detectable.

There is a downside, of course. Bike riders, like other top athletes, are so fit that their heart rate is preternaturally low; EPO thickens the blood, making it harder to pump around the body, and also more liable to clot. In the early days of EPO, there were a number of mysterious deaths—usually from a heart attack, usually in the middle of the night—of otherwise healthy cyclists. The assumption was that their heart rate had dropped during sleep and became simply insufficient to pump the blood. To counter this, EPO takers were said to get up in the middle of the night to exercise. Some also used a kind of thoracic alarm clock, which woke them when their heart rate dropped too low.

If you want to put a date on the final loss of innocence (ours, not that of the inner cycling world), you could do worse than suggest July 8, 1998—a century on from Linton's win in Bordeaux-Paris. Willy Voet, a Belgian *soigneur*, was stopped by customs officers at the French border. *Soigneur* means healer, and the job traditionally consists of giving massages and overseeing the day-to-day fitness of the riders. Voet worked for the Festina team. (In the Tour, teams are named after their sponsors—hence, for example, Deutsche Telekom, Rabobank, U.S. Postal Service, and the improbable Farm Frites.) He was on his way to join the start of that year's race and transporting, in two refrigerated bags, "234 doses of EPO, 80 phials of growth hormones, 160 capsules of testosterone, and 60 capsules of Asaflow, an aspirin-based product which fluidifies the blood." (The International Cycling Union currently restricts more than a hundred substances, and Tour doctors test three or four riders each day.) During a subsequent three-year ban, Voet wrote his memoirs, "Massacre à la Chaîne," where he sets out dispassionately, and with rather unconvincing remorse, the drugs he administered: amphetamines, corticoids, growth hormones (clenbuterol, creatine, nandrolone), and, of course, EPO. Voet explains that each drug has a specific function for the various parts of a stage race: thus, sprinters would take trinitrin five or six kilometres before the finish to help them launch their final attack. *La bomba* has given way to "*le pot belge*" (the Belgian mixture), whose typical contents might be: amphetamines, antalgics, caffeine, cocaine, heroin, and sometimes corticoids. This is a world in which the phrase "caffeine injection" refers not to a double espresso but to something with a needle on the end which helps you get through a time trial in the mountains. Voet describes how the *soigneur* is constantly tinkering and adjusting, in full collusion with his charge. (Here the notion that riders are sometimes slipped wicked substances without their knowledge is thoroughly mocked.) He reports that Richard Virenque, the highly popular French leader of the Festina team, was worried about his preparation for a time-trial stage during the 1997 Tour de France. But Voet himself wasn't worried: "Given his regular treatments of EPO and especially growth hormones, he was as ready as he would ever be. All he needed was a well-timed injection of caffeine, plus Solucamphre (to open his bronchial tubes)."



In this world, the dunces and losers are those who rely on their clean physiques. Voet cites the case of Charly Mottet, a top French rider of the eighties and nineties, who came to the RMO team, where amazement was expressed that "the bloke was clean." Mottet had, in many people's view, the talent to win the Tour, but Voet recognized that he lacked "the wherewithal to make it happen." In other words, he refused the tempting pharmacopoeia. Mottet was known for his weakness over the final third of the Tour, and the *soigneur's* conclusion is as sad as it is hypocritical: "Yes indeed, Charly never had the career that he deserved."

Voet's disclosures after his arrest led to a police raid on the Festina team in their hotel, and the riders' ejection from the Tour on Day Seven. Six other teams quit in protest—though their departures were open to alternative explanation. One by one, various members of the Festina team admitted illegal drug use, though Virenque protested his innocence from the start and continues to do so. The only note of unintentional comedy that year came during a judicial hearing in Lille, when the judge put it to him that "you must have known what was going on because you were the leader." Virenque, in a panicky mishearing, replied, "Me a dealer? No, I am not a dealer." (The two English words are used in French.) Whereupon Virenque's lawyer interjected, "No, Richard, the judge said *leader*. It's not an offense to be a leader."

In racing terms, EPO led to what was christened "the two-speed Tour"—those using it and those not. It also produced a blurring of the traditional distinction between endurance men and climbers. All of a sudden, riders of quite chunky body profile were motoring up hills previously the preserve of the quail-bodied climber. In retrospect, various heroic exploits now seem more dubious.

Voet explains the mechanics and use of EPO. The *soigneur* takes a blood sample from a rider, puts it in a portable centrifuge, and obtains a reading of the hematocrit, or red-blood-cell level in percentage terms. An average man might have a level of forty-four per cent, which would fluctuate with exertion, dehydration, blood loss, altitude, and other conditions. A *soigneur* would therefore monitor his charges in the runup to a big race and administer EPO if the blood needed boosting: he would also adjust accordingly throughout the event. In 1997, the International Cycling Union fixed the legal limit at fifty per cent. But since *soigneurs* would examine their riders' blood daily, only bad calibration would make you fail an official test.

The 2000 Tour was largely decided on the Pyrenean climb to Hautacam, on Monday, July 10th. After five hours of cycling, a hundred and ninety-one kilometres, and two high mountain passes, Lance Armstrong, the 1999 winner, climbed the final fourteen kilometres at such a pace as to put all his main rivals at least four minutes behind him in the over-all classification. Virenque was one of those overtaken in Armstrong's exhilarating attack: "He came upon us like an airplane." During last year's win, Armstrong had faced some skepticism from the French press. How could a promising, aggressive, but often unthinking rider, after receiving treatment for testicular cancer, which had already metastasized into the lungs and brain, return and not only ride the Tour but actually win it? Renewed determination, a body outline refashioned by chemotherapy, a greater acceptance of suffering, and a wiser tactical approach—these were not sufficient answers for some. Perhaps the cancer drugs had inadvertently beneficial side effects? (Ironically, Armstrong's doctors had at one point prescribed EPO.)

Armstrong spent much of last year reiterating "I'm clean" at press conferences, and felt that journalists deliberately misconstrued him when he spoke French. He is a lean, prickly, single-minded character, whose stance before the microphone implies that tact is for girls; he is after victory, not popularity. This approach did little to wash away doubt. Daniel Baal, the president of the French Cycling Federation, told the London Sunday *Times* after Hautacam, "I would love to know what is happening today. . . . I do not know if we must speak of a new method [of doping] or of a new substance. The controls have had some impact, I saw many riders in difficulty on the climbs and that was good. But then must I have enthusiasm for how the race is being won?" Baal's problem is simply this: to know what he has seen.

Despite what might seem to outsiders a vast moral taint, the Tour remains extremely popular in France. This is the more surprising given that the last French victory, by Bernard Hinault, came fifteen years ago. Since then, the race has been won by two Americans, two Spaniards, an Irishman, a Dane, a German, and an Italian. (Imagine the hyperbolically named World Series becoming such a foreign preserve for so long: how would the networks, and the average American fan, react?) In 1999, not a single stage was won by the French; this year, they managed just two out of twenty-one. Such robust zeal for the victories of others confirms the suspicion that the French sports fan tends to be as much a devotee of the sport itself as of the team or of the nation, to be more of a purist than his Anglo-Saxon equivalent.

Purist does not, however, mean moralist. Footage of French police thundering into cyclists' hotel rooms in mid-Tour may delight editorialists, but it offends many domestic cycling fans. The name of Richard Virenque was painted on the tarmac of the Ventoux climb as often this year as any other. (For that matter, when members of the Festina team returned to competition after their 1998 disgrace, and appeared in the Vuelta, the Tour of Spain, they were greeted with applause from Spanish fans.) There is an instinctive French anti-authoritarianism that causes many to side unflinchingly with their heroes against the judiciary, the gendarmerie, and opportunistic politicians. But cycling is also different in one key respect. In other sports, fans go to a stadium, where there are entrance fees, tacky souvenirs, overpriced food, a general marshalling and corralling, and a professional exploitation of the fan's emotions. With the Tour de France, the heroes come to you, to your village, your town, or arrange a rendezvous on the slopes of some spectacular mountain. The Tour is free, you choose where you watch it from, bring your own picnic,

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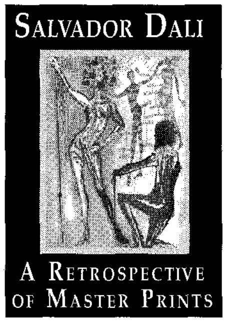
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and the marketing hard sell consists of little more than a van offering official Tour T-shirts at sixty francs a throw just before the race arrives. Then you get to see your heroes' grimacing faces from merely a few feet away; every seat is a ringside seat. These aspects make the Tour unique, and still rightly cherished by the French.

THE BALCONY

It was a night like this, at the end of summer.

We had rented, I remember, a room with a balcony.
How many days and nights? Five, perhaps—no more.

Even when we weren't touching we were making love.
We stood on our little balcony in the summer night.
And off somewhere, the sounds of human life.

We were the soon to be anointed monarchs,
well disposed to our subjects. Just beneath us,
sounds of a radio playing, an aria we didn't in those years know.

Someone dying of love. Someone from whom time had taken
the only happiness, who was alone now,
impoverished, without beauty.

The rapturous notes of an unendurable grief, of isolation and terror,
the nearly impossible to sustain slow phrases of the ascending figures—
they drifted out over the dark water
like an ecstasy.

Such a small mistake. And many years later,
the only thing left of that night, of the hours in that room.

—Louise Glück

Some play it as a *jour de fête*, part of a communal thrill in small village or country byway; the more hard core will spend a couple of buffeted nights on the Ventoux in an ad-hoc trailer park, suffering the wind and cold in fellow-feeling with the riders; the fan who wants to know what is actually happening will follow the live TV feed from helicopter and motorbike cameras. Satellite dishes clamped to many of the camper vans indicate that methods two and three are often combined, but most go for one and three. So on July 13th—by which time the wind had dropped, and the temperature at the top of Mont Ventoux had risen to a generous six degrees centigrade—I headed for Saint-Didier, a small village east of Carpentras. The *peloton* would reach here after half an hour's riding, at some time between 12:27 P.M., if the riders were averaging thirty-eight kph, and 12:39 P.M., if they were dawdling along at thirty-four kph. Their route, down a plane-lined alley toward a handsome 1756 belfry gate, was marked out by chunky red-and-white barriers. The curbside tables at the Bar du Siècle had been bagged early; outside Coiffure Salon Martine the eponymous hairdresser and her friends sat in white plastic chairs sipping white wine; there was minimalist bunting in the trees and a group of tots with *tricolores* painted on their cheeks being inducted into the mystery of the Tour. A couple of policemen were genially ignored as they tried to stop the crowd leaning too far into the road.

First comes the publicity caravan and the team cars, bikes mounted on their roofs, spare wheels rotating idly; then a ten-minute warning of the race's approach, and the approaching clatter of the TV helicopter. Then, at 12:35 P.M.—indicating a slowish tempo—it goes like this: two riders suddenly appear round the bend and are past, *whoosh*, before you can turn your head—thirty seconds—three main groups—*whoosh whoosh whoosh*—three small groups—a few dropped riders—the very last one a member of the Cofidis team, because by now your eyes have adjusted—you also note he has ginger hair—then *whoosh* he is gone—and a swift two minutes are concluded with the blaring horns of the final race cars. I had expected it to go quickly, but in trying to take in everything I had seen virtually nothing. I hadn't recognized a single rider, because I hadn't specifically looked out for Armstrong or Virenque or Marco Pantani, the 1998 winner. They were in amongst the lean and gaudy figures going faster than I was prepared for. Only when they clustered in groups did I recognize team colors: the pink of Telekom, the blue-and-white of Banesto, and the Spanish-omelette colors of Mapei. Still, I had seen almost nothing from just a few feet away, and in a spirit of benign fellow-feeling. That was the point of the *jour de fête*. Then I drove off to find a television while Coiffure Salon Martine reopened and the Bar du Siècle clattered on with more drinks.

Two and a half hours later, after making a long loop without ever losing sight of the Ventoux, the race reached Bédoin, where Simpson may have had his last drink. The remnants of an early escape were chased down; Armstrong sent his U.S. Postal teammates Tyler Hamilton and Kevin Livingston to the front, a fierce pace was set, and what the French call *la grande lessive* (the big wash—or, perhaps, the great rinse) began, as rider after rider was slowly dropped. With ten kilometres left, the cleansing had reduced the leading group to six (Armstrong, the second-placed Jan Ullrich, of Germany, and Virenque among them), with Pantani—a tiny, bald, earringed Italian climber—hanging off the back. They passed Danish flags painted on the road, though the Danes had little to cheer this year; then another national enclave marked "BELGIUM DYNAMITE" and blazoned with the name of the Belgian sprinter Tom Steels, who had dropped out earlier in the day and didn't get to read his name; there were signs for Polti

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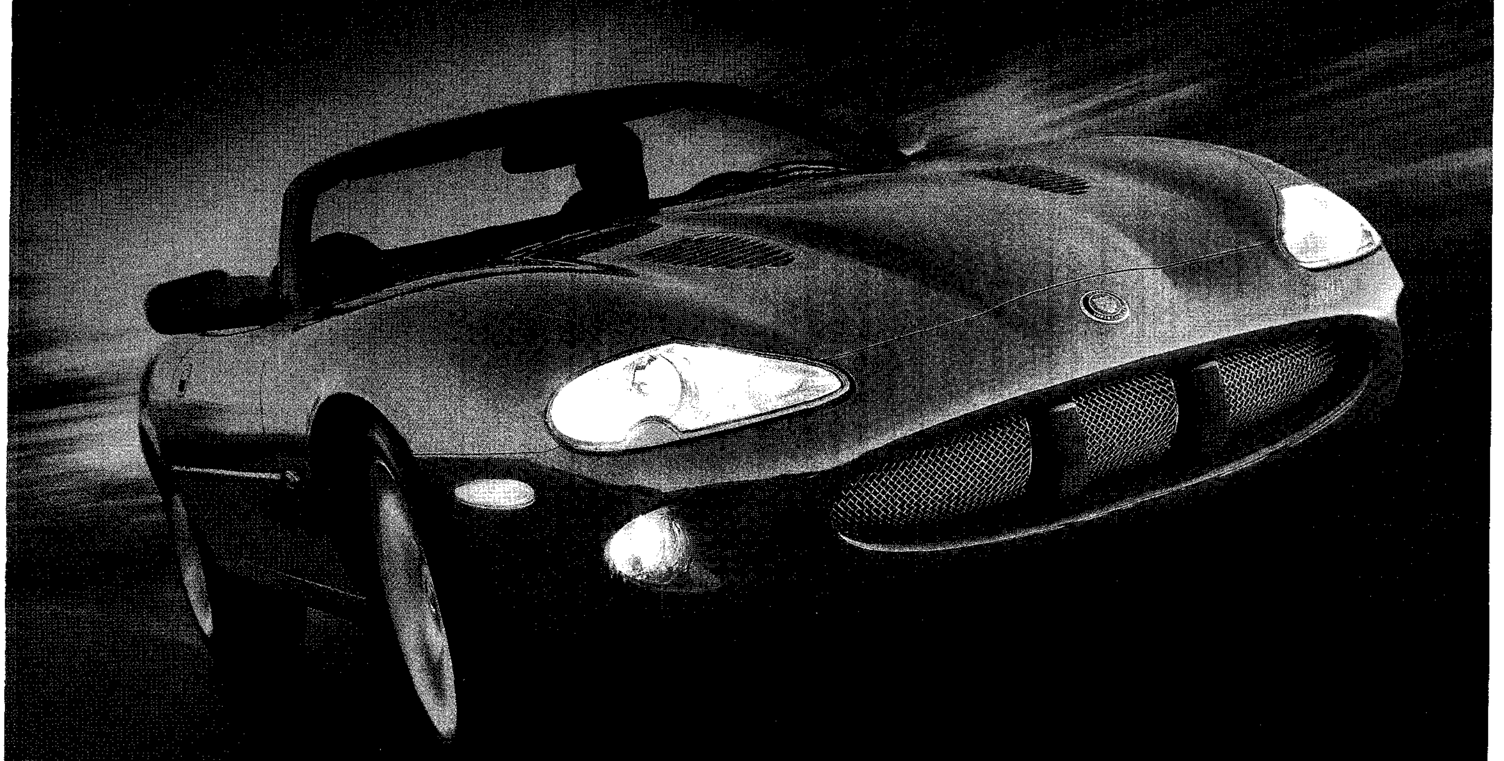

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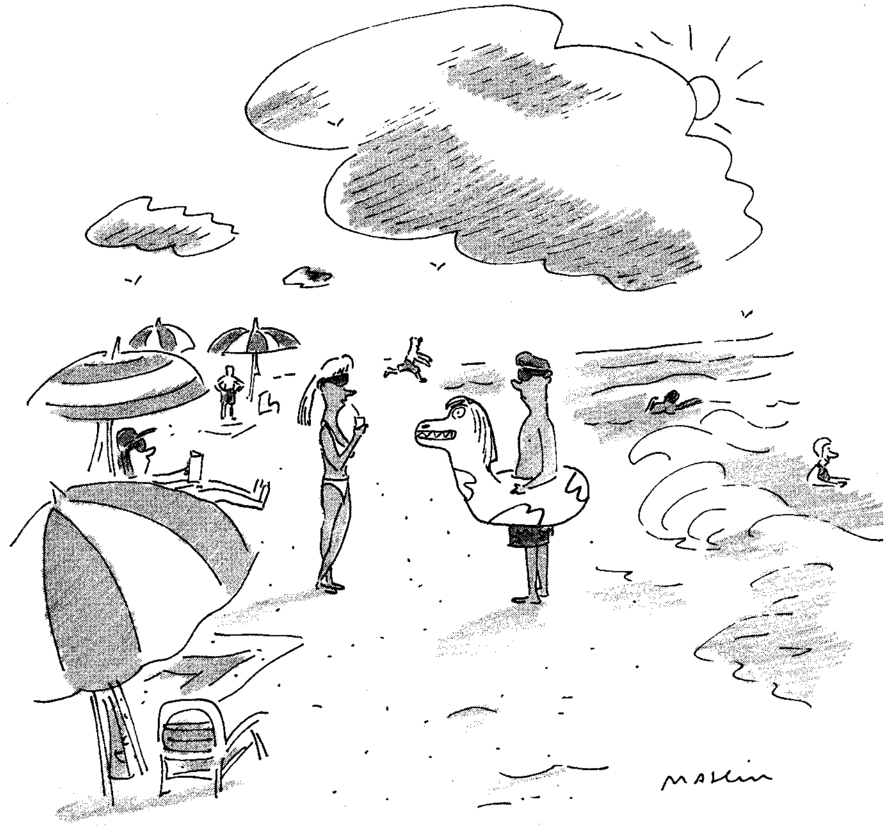
and Rabobank, Pantani and Virenque. The crowds gradually thickened as the mountain exerted its mute thrall.

The previous time Armstrong had ridden up Mont Ventoux, in the Dauphiné Libéré, earlier in the year, he had cracked, and lost over a minute to Tyler Hamilton. The experience had left him apprehensive. This time, however, he watched as others cracked. At Hautacam, he had produced a great attacking ride; here, for most of the ascent, he showed how enthralling a great defensive ride can be. He stayed with his main rivals for the yellow jersey, keeping a steady pace, showing no weakness, and implicitly telling them, You want to win this thing? Then you'll have to attack me. And none of them were strong enough to do so—except an intermittently revitalized Pantani, who had started the day more than ten minutes behind Armstrong. The race leader allowed him to climb ahead, carried on monitoring Ullrich and Virenque, and then, with three thousand metres to go, left his defensive posture and raced across to Pantani, taking a full half minute out of Ullrich and Virenque in the process. He passed the Simpson memorial without so much as a nod. Alongside Pantani, he kept telling him, "*Plus vite! Plus vite!*" and the two rode to the summit together, where in the last few feet Armstrong eased to give Pantani the day's victory. It was a *geste de seigneur*, French commentators agreed. To the rest of the field, Armstrong's ride up the Ventoux simply said, I'm the boss. They believed it; and, apart from a bad afternoon on the Tour's final mountain, five days later, he rode as boss to Paris and final victory.

Pantani won another stage before retiring from the race, perhaps to concentrate on his forthcoming criminal trial in Forlì, in central Italy, for the use of banned substances back in 1995. The final mountain stage was won by Virenque, who himself faces the judiciary in Lille this autumn, charged with "complicity to supply, incite the use of, and administer drugs"; also with "complicity in their import, possession, supply, transport, and acquisition." How many of those who went up the Ventoux last month were taking something fortifying yet legal, or illegal yet undetectable, or illegal yet detectable yet worth taking the risk for? The evidence



"Is that an inflatable sea horse, or are you just glad to see me?"

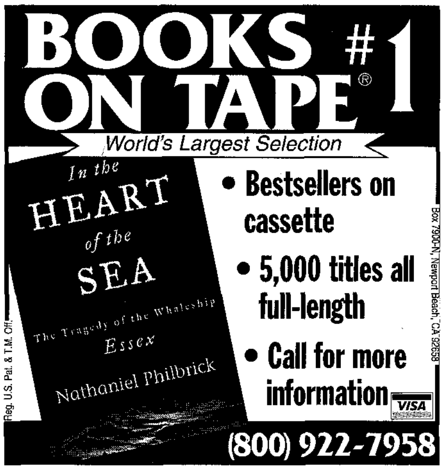
is always contradictory. Riders who are notoriously clean, like the Englishman Chris Boardman, a world-class time trialist regularly defeated by the mountains, never seem to notice anything going on. Whereas the whistle-blowers, the drug takers, and the drug givers offer a picture in which everyone is doing it and only the naïve or the ridiculously principled abstain. Benjo Maso once asked a French rider from the seventies named Lecroq what percentage of riders took drugs in his day. “One hundred and twenty per cent,” he replied, meaning that the masseurs, *soigneurs*, mechanics, and support staff would be doing so as well. Voet confirmed this social overflowing of the drug habit, but his own estimate was that sixty per cent of the *peloton* are users.

That was then, of course. This year is different—which is always the argument. On the eve of the 2000 tour, the International Cycling Union announced that a test for EPO had finally been found, if not yet perfected. Urine samples would be taken from riders, and frozen until the test was ready. With this threat of retrospective justice in place, officialdom prayed for a cleaner Tour. Except that three riders were thrown off for overheated hematocrit levels on the very first day. Except that several top riders cited in Voet’s book as taking all the drugs he administered were still riding—and riding well—in this year’s Tour. The results of the tests for EPO may not be known for some time, but the first drug news to come through is unsettling: thirty-eight of ninety-six urine samples taken this year contained corticosteroids and salbutamol, which are on the restricted list.

The world portrayed by Voet is enclosed, secretive, furiously competitive, and not too bothered about moral questions. Chris Boardman told the Sunday *Times*, “My own reasons for not taking drugs are ultimately more practical than moral. Why should I risk it?” To which the seductive answer comes: Because with this new drug it isn’t a risk; you’re ahead of the game in both senses. Voet describes Virenque approaching a hospital biologist and trying to get some synthetic hemoglobin (which oxygenates the blood without raising the hematocrit level); according to one source, it is already being deployed widely in Italian sport. Voet also derides the notion that a test for EPO will clean up the Tour: “EPO is already being supplanted by other forms of doping, both cellular and molecular.” During Voet’s last weeks at Festina, the team doctor was busy studying the sporting application of the cancer drug interleukin. It would be ironic indeed if Armstrong, medical victim and sporting hero to many, had inadvertently redirected attention from laboratories to hospitals.

Does it matter, finally, if a leader swaps consonants and becomes a dealer? Cyclists use bike technology to beat one another; they use performance labs and wind tunnels to discover the best aerodynamic positions; they are “computer slaves,” as Armstrong puts it. The U.S. Postal team riders have two-way radio contact and wear heart monitors so that their team director can tell them to adjust their pedalling accordingly. Would it matter if they also used drug technology to acquire that additional edge?

It matters, I think, for three reasons. Sentimentally, we want there still to be some connection, however thinned, between the world of the Rudge-Whitworth Keep Fit Girl and that of the professional cyclist. Morally, we are still Petrarchians, and recognize that certain shortcuts are wrong. Sport’s history is bleakened when we remember those defeated by East German women swimmers in the days of Communism, or by certain American athletes whose body profiles thickened alarmingly in close-season training. In cycling’s case, we need only quote Voet’s epitaph for Charly Mottet: “Yes indeed, Charly never had the career that he deserved.” Finally, and practically, it matters because the complex relationship between spectator and athlete, fandom’s *pot belge* of explosive emotions, depends at bottom on truth and trust. The Tour de France may be an example of “purposeless suffering”; it is also, as Armstrong says, “the most gallant athletic endeavor in the world.” Whether we are the puzzled president of the French Cycling Federation on Hautacam, or Martine of Coiffure Salon Martine sitting by the roadside in Saint-Didier waiting for two minutes of lurid Lycra to pass, what we need and what we want is simply this: to know what we have seen. ◆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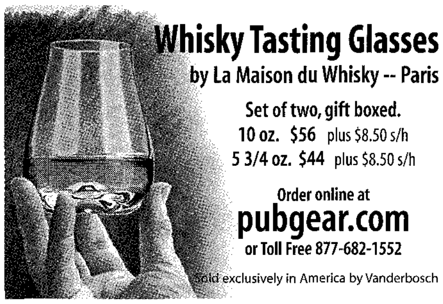
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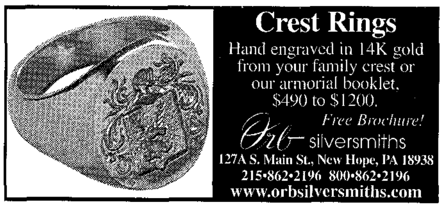
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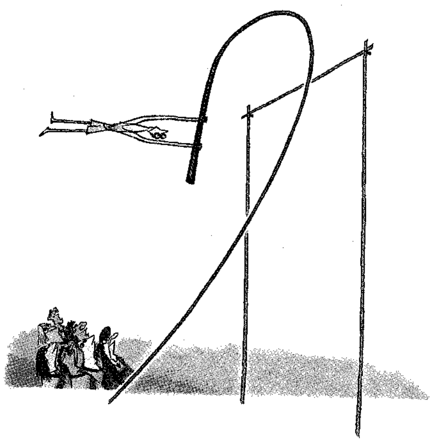


ARNOLD ROTH

Except for the B pole vault, the meet was over. Whoever it was that came to watch track meets at Cleveland High, in the San Fernando Valley, circa 1968 had left the stands. Most of our team was back on the bus. If I had been less absorbed in the vaulting, I might have been outraged by the general indifference.

Brad Bishop, elfin ace of our vaulting squad, was locked in battle with the laughing, dangerous Steve Luce. Luce was, people said, Bishop's only serious rival in the league. He was fast and, I thought, shockingly casual. Two Cleveland girls drifted up, and he actually went over *between jumps* and put his arm around one of them. Luce had long, sun-bleached hair, a wide chest, and a surfer's hipless saunter. He seemed amused to be competing with Bishop, who was six inches shorter, pale and poker-faced, with short dark hair. I was spotting for Bishop—stepping in to catch his pole after jumps. I felt sick with worry that this strange, blithe Luce might win.

I was a freshman at Taft High, and a C vaulter. At a big, athletically competitive California high school like ours, going out for track was like going out for the circus. You needed an act, a specialty, a freakish talent. The pole vault was an exception. You didn't need to be built like a mastiff (shot put) or a whippet (sprints) or have legs that ended at your armpits (high jump). You could—in theory, anyway—learn vaulting. None of our coaches knew much about it, though. Certainly none of them would have risked his neck demonstrating good technique. So we basically learned from each other. And my exemplar was Bishop.

He was a senior, and so small that he could probably have competed—under the height, weight, and age formula they used—as a C. But most C vaulters were hapless young oafs like me. And so Bishop competed as a B, where he regularly outjumped bigger, stronger, faster guys who lacked his finesse.

Luce lacked it, certainly. He was a classic crash-and-burn artist, relying on raw speed and strength and the wild spring of the big fibreglass poles that had revolutionized vaulting a few years before. Spotting for such vaulters was dodgy, literally—you had to catch the pole, but you also had to watch for the falling body. On jumps that went wrong, they were lucky to land in the pit. Luce was furiously self-destructing on half of his jumps that day, but he was also managing one clean vault at each height. Sometimes he suddenly, appallingly, cleared the bar by a foot or more. When it was raised to eleven-six, only he and Bishop remained in competition.

Bishop's vaults were the antithesis of Luce's mad blasts. In practices, he tinkered endlessly with every aspect of his attack—his "step" (the exact point from which to begin his run), his grip, his acceleration into the box, his plant and pushoff, his quiet, flawless form on the rise, his twist and release. The pole he used was the smallest the school owned. It was barely eleven feet long, but Bishop could send his entire body, in a sort of anti-gravitational handstand, sailing past the end of the pole as it snapped upright.

It was his elegant combination of coolness and passion that fascinated me. We weren't friends. I knew nothing about his life off the field. He was affable, and he could be dryly funny, but he was reserved in a way that made him seem older than even the other seniors. And he was never more reserved than when he was vaulting.

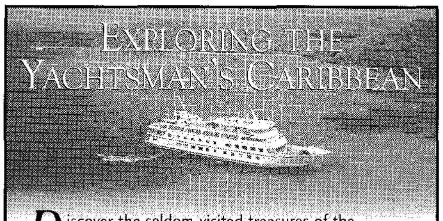
At the Cleveland meet, he wasn't even watching Luce. He was taking his time preparing for his jumps—rocking back and forth at the top of the runway, pole loosely held in one hand, studying the thin, triangular bar set against the sky a hundred feet away. That the rest of the meet was over, that the sun was going down, that whole minutes were passing—none of it seemed to register with him.

The small group of vaulters watching the Bishop-Luce showdown began to swell with new arrivals. I was pleased to see them, but it was also odd. Vaulters were, within the team, not unresented. We were excused from the general fitness drills, and our practices, we were often told, bore an unfortunate resemblance to long, lazy bull sessions. It was something about all the lounging we did on the huge, foam-filled turquoise cushions that served as pits. These were, moreover, the Vietnam War years, when even the high-school track team was riven by Kulturkampf, and the vaulters were suspiciously regarded, often with reason, by the coaches and their more loyal athletes as Thoreau-reading, dope-smoking, John Carlos-loving hippies. Bishop did not belong in this category—he was like a straight arrow from another era. But he was a mainstay of the radical-individualist vaulting clique. And so it was strange, even moving, to see hawkish hurdlers and discus throwers quietly sidling up to find places on the grass near the runway.

Then, abruptly, Luce was out, missing on his third try at eleven-nine. He climbed from the pit looking stricken—the first sign he'd given that he cared if he won or lost. He took his pole from his spotter and, without a word, started toward the Cleveland gym. As he passed Bishop he smiled ruefully and, with a little upsnap of his chin, acknowledged his victory. Bishop nodded once.

Then he went back to work. He had the bar raised to twelve feet, which he cleared. He had it raised to twelve-three. The little pole he was using looked comically unequal to such a height. But Bishop was drawing a new map of the possible. The sun set. The shadows on the field turned a deep blue-green. The arc of watchers alongside the runway continued to grow. It now included our entire team. Even Luce's girls sat and stayed. Our coaches stood off to the side, muttering with the Cleveland coaches. Nobody spoke to Bishop. Two old meet officials who were checking the heights and setting the bar waited quietly beside the vault standards. Bishop stood at the top of the runway, rocking and staring at the bar, for minutes on end. When, on his third attempt, he cleared twelve-three, there were shouts. The pole, as I caught it, was quivering like a tuning fork. As he climbed from the pit, Bishop murmured to the meet officials, "Twelve-six."

—*William Finnegan*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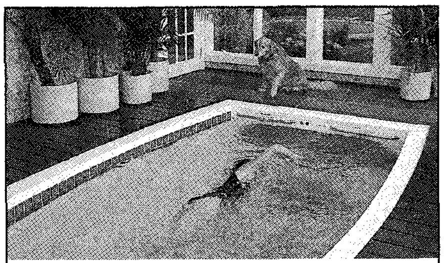
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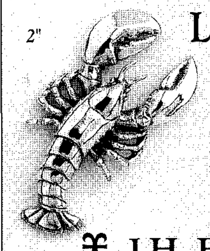

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PROFILES

THE CHOSEN ONE

Will golf ever be the same after Tiger Woods?

BY DAVID OWEN

On a hot Sunday afternoon last May, Tiger Woods conducted a golf exhibition in Oklahoma City. During the hour before he appeared, while a large crowd baked in the bleachers, a member of his entourage held a trivia contest, with T-shirts for prizes. One of the questions: In what year was Tiger Woods born? The first guess, by a very young fan, was 1925. That's off by half a century, but the error is understandable. Woods has accomplished so much as a golfer that it's easy to forget that he's only twenty-four. In a sport in which good players seldom peak before their thirties, and often remain competitive at the highest levels well into their forties, Woods is off to a mind-boggling start. Most recently, he won the British Open with a record-breaking score of nineteen under par. After that blowout, Ernie Els, a terrific young South African player and the winner of two United States Opens, said with a resigned smile, "We'll have to go to the drawing board again, and maybe make the holes bigger for us and a little smaller for him."

When Woods eventually appeared for his Oklahoma exhibition, his entrance was appropriately dramatic. A small convoy of golf carts bore down on the bleachers from the far end of the driving range, while martial-sounding rock music blasted from the public-address system. The exhibition was the final event in a two-day program sponsored by the Tiger Woods Foundation, a charitable organization whose goal is to inspire children—especially underprivileged children—and "to make golf look more like America," as Woods himself says. Forty-two cities had applied to be visited by Woods and his team in 2000, and Oklahoma City was the first of just four cities to be chosen. Among the reasons for its selection was the existence of this particular facility: a low-fee public golf course, with free lessons for children on weekends, situated in an unprepossessing neighborhood not far from Oklahoma City's unprepossessing downtown.

Before stepping up to the practice tee, Woods answered questions from the audience, whose members differed from golf's principal constituency in that many of them were neither middle-aged nor white. One of the first questions came from a junior-high-school-aged fan, who asked, "How do you maintain your personal life and your golf career at the same time?"

Woods, who was leaning on his pitching wedge, said, "That's a great question. When I'm off the golf course, I like to get away from everything, and I like to keep everything private, because I feel that I have a right to that." There was heavy applause from the crowd. "There are exceptions to that, where the press likes to make up a few stories here and there. But that's just the way it goes."

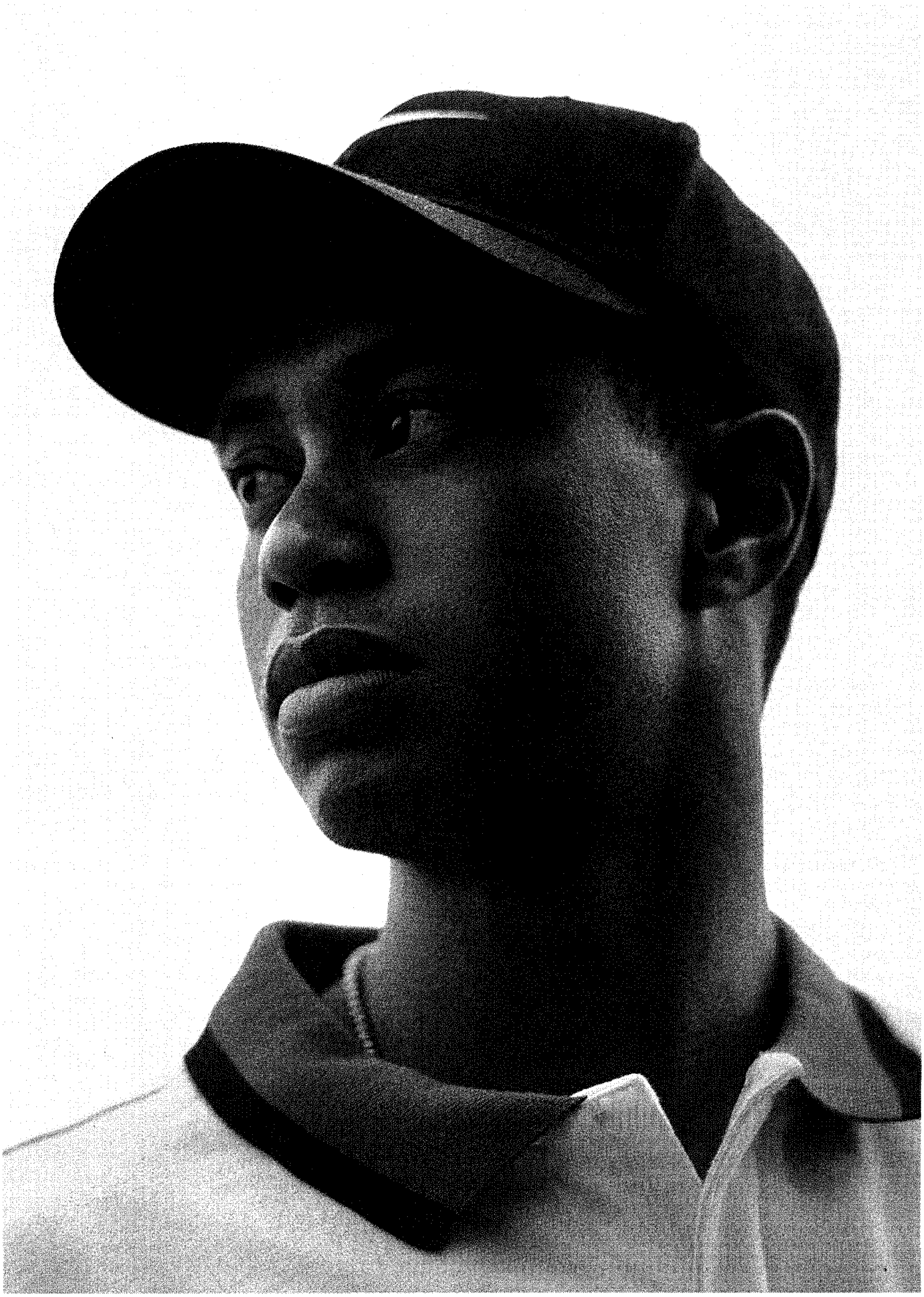
When he said that, I shifted uneasily on the small, roped-off patch of ground from which members of the press had been asked to view the proceedings. Woods doesn't think highly of reporters. Particular journalists have annoyed him at various times over the years, and photographers always seem to click their cameras in the middle of his backswing. To be sure, chilly exchanges between Woods and the press have become less frequent as he has resigned himself to the public-relations side of his job. He now knows many of the press-tent regulars by name—even by nickname—and he sometimes goes out of his way to be courteous and helpful. But he has always been impatient with people who don't work as hard as he does, and most of the questions we ask are lazy, repetitive, and dumb. (Earlier in the day, on another part of the course, an eight-year-old golfer had hit a shot that clobbered a photographer, and Woods got a big laugh by saying, "I've been trying to do that for years.")

The night before, at a fund-raising dinner for the benefit of the foundation, I had stood glumly for half an hour at one end of a corridor with a group of other glum reporters, awaiting a promised opportunity to observe Woods's arrival at the dinner (but not, we were reminded several times, to ask him any questions). As it turned out, he arrived by a different route. Later, we were offered a chance to look down upon the evening's festivities in silence from a steel catwalk high above the crowd, a hugely unappealing prospect. I avoided that fate by managing to pass for non-media—I had had lunch at a barbecue joint earlier that day with several people connected with the foundation, and they arranged for me to fill an empty seat at a table at the actual dinner—but I never shook the slightly shameful feeling that I was unwanted and didn't belong.

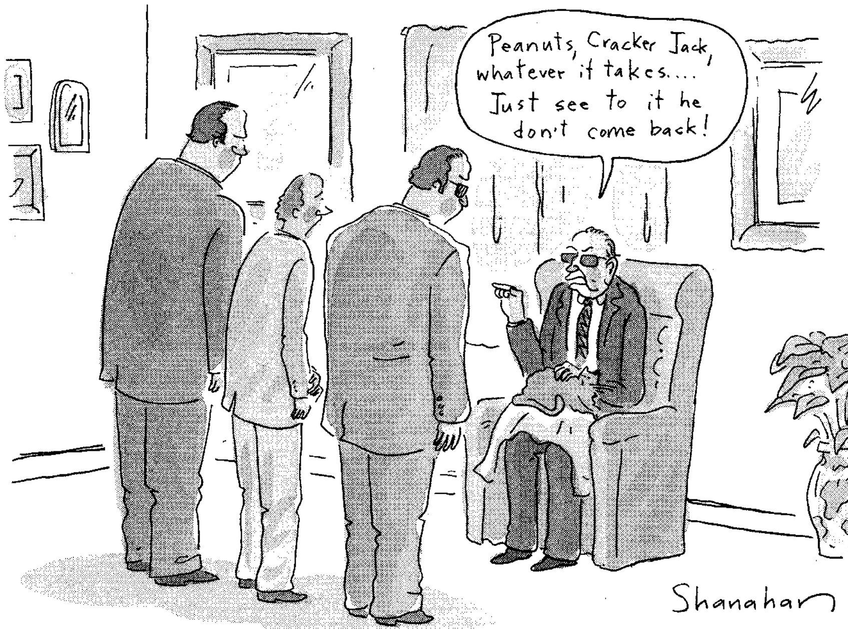
Many very famous people become very famous because, for some compelling and probably unwholesome reason, they crave the approval of the rest of us. That's why they put up with the media, among other things. Even the ones who vigorously defend their privacy seem to do so in a way that attracts an awful lot of publicity, suggesting that their aversion to celebrity is more complicated than they let on. With Woods, though, you get the feeling that his fame mostly gets in the way. We intrude on his golf when he's playing golf, and we intrude on his private life when he's not. He can be a dazzlingly emotional and telegenic performer, and he surely finds it thrilling to walk down fairways lined with thousands of deliriously happy admirers shouting his name, but he conveys the impression that he would play every bit as hard if the cameras and the microphones and the galleries simply disappeared.

That's an awe-inspiring character trait, but it's also a chilling one. Part of the fun of being a sports fan is harboring the delusion that great athletic achievements are in some sense collaborations between athletes and their rooting sections. Woods's accomplishments are so outsized that it's hard to conceive of them

JBG



Some pros once viewed Woods as overhyped; nowadays, they stop what they're doing and watch. Photograph by Michael Faye.


Peanuts, Cracker Jack, whatever it takes.... Just see to it he don't come back!
Shanahan

TAKEN OUT AT THE BALLGAME

as belonging to anyone but himself. As Tom Watson said of him after the British Open, "He is something supernatural."

Before Woods turned thirteen, he had researched and memorized the main competitive accomplishments of Jack Nicklaus because he already intended to exceed them. Between the mid-nineteen-seventies and a month or two ago, sportswriters viewed Nicklaus's remarkable career (which was crowned by eighteen victories in golf's four major championships) as the permanent benchmark of greatness in golf; the new consensus is that Woods is capable of breaking all of Nicklaus's records, unless he loses interest in the game or injures himself or decides to run for President instead. Nicklaus himself has always been one of Woods's most enthusiastic cheerleaders. In 1996, he said that Woods could ultimately win the Masters more times than he and Arnold Palmer had combined—more than ten times, in other words. That statement seemed like crazy hyperbole at the time; it doesn't any longer.

Here in Oklahoma, though, Woods wasn't focussing on the record book. Earlier in the day, he had worked one on one with twenty-five young local golfers, most of whom were members of ethnic minorities. He watched them swing, offered advice, teed up balls for them, and made them laugh. The kids all looked nervous while they awaited their turns, but most were smiling by the time he moved on. One of those golfers was Treas Nelson, a high-school junior from Lawton, Oklahoma, who had just won the Class 5A Girls' State Championship; she is the first black golfer in Oklahoma to win a statewide high-school title. After she finished her session with Woods, I violated a ban on over-the-rope media fraternization—a ban that was enforced not only by roving public-relations personnel but also by Woods's cadre of Schwarzeneggeresque bodyguards—and asked her what Tiger had told her.

"He said I have the pizza-man syndrome," she told me. "I get my right hand too much like this." She lifted her right arm with the elbow bent, as though she were holding a pizza on a tray at shoulder height. "He said he has the same problem." She was beaming. Like almost all the kids who received individual instruction, she was wearing Nike shorts and a Nike shirt—goodies provided by Woods's biggest commercial sponsor. She had supplemented this uniform with a pair of Nike earrings. "I don't know if he noticed that," she said. But she hoped he had.

"I can relate to these kids," Woods said a little later that day. "I'm not too far from their age. If these kids saw Jack Nicklaus, I don't think they would have an appreciation for what he's done in the game or what he has to offer, just because of the fact that it's hard for a person of Nicklaus's age to relate to a kid. But I'm not too far removed from my teens. I can say 'Dude,' and that's cool—that's fine."

It's only because of Woods that most of these kids even know who Jack Nicklaus is. Woods spends almost as much time studying golf's history as he does making it, and he goes out of his way to share his knowledge of that history with the youngsters who idolize him. In answer to a question from the audience at his exhibition, he said, "When I was young, I looked up to a lot of different players for a lot of different reasons. Obviously, Jack Nicklaus was the greatest of all time. Ben Hogan was the greatest driver there ever was. Seve Ballesteros probably had the best short game. Ben Crenshaw putted the best. So what I did was analyze every different player's game and try to pick the best out of each and every player and try to look up to that. I wasn't going to look up to just one person." For young golfers twenty years from now, however, looking up to the best player in each of the areas Woods mentioned may be no more complicated than looking up to Woods himself. He leads the tour in most of the several dozen statistical categories that tour officials keep track of, including career earnings. (His tournament winnings during the first seven months of 2000 alone exceeded Nicklaus's lifetime earnings.)

During Woods's exhibition, the younger members of the crowd weren't thinking about statistics. What they really wanted to see was a trick they had watched him perform in a hugely popular Nike television commercial: they wanted to see him bounce a golf ball on the face of his wedge while passing the club from hand to hand and between his legs and behind his back, and then hit the ball right out of the air as easily as if it were teed up on the ground. (That commercial arose by accident, when Woods, feeling bored between takes on a shoot for another Nike commercial, began amusing himself with a stunt he had taught himself as a kid, and the director, entranced, asked him if he could do it again.)

"I heard a rumor that this thing I did

on TV was all computerized," Woods said, as he began bouncing the ball. "It's kind of a vicious rumor." He passed the club between his legs. "Now, I don't know where that rumor started, whether it was the public or the press, but they obviously hadn't seen me do this before." He bounced the ball up high. "And catch it like this." He stopped the ball, frozen, on the face of his club, let it sit there a moment, then began bouncing it again. "Or I can start out doing it left-handed, if you want me to." Bounce, bounce, bounce. "Or go back to the right." He bounced the ball up over his shoulder from behind, and caught it on the club face in front. "Now, I didn't put this one in the commercial, because it's the hardest one—it's when you hit the ball off the butt end of the club." He bounced the ball high again, twirled the club so that its shaft was perpendicular to the ground, bounced the ball straight up off the top of the rubber grip, twirled the club back to its former position, and resumed bouncing the ball on the face. "Let's see—it took me four takes to do the Nike spot. Let's see if I can do this out here." He bounced the ball high, took his regular grip on the club, planted his feet, and, just before the ball fell back to earth, smacked it more than a third of the way down the range.

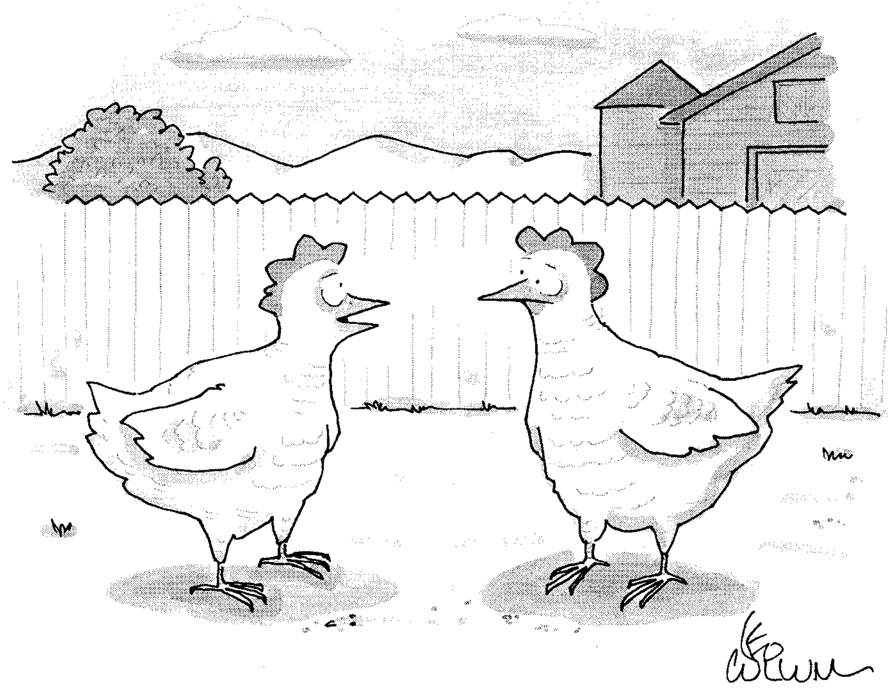
A few hours before Woods's exhibition, I sat with the all-black congregation of the St. John Missionary Baptist Church (motto: "We Strive to Be 'The Best Church This Side of Judgement' ") while Tiger's father, Earl Woods, gave a guest sermon. His talk was preceded by hymns, prayers, and half a dozen full-immersion baptisms, which were conducted in a large tank that was visible through an opening in the wall above the altar. His subject was his only subject. "Tiger was not created to be a golfer," he said. "Tiger was made to be a good person, and that was first and foremost in our family." Earl is shorter and considerably wider than Tiger. He has a good preaching voice, which caught in his throat a couple of times, despite the fact that he had given essentially the same presentation dozens, if not hundreds, of times before. "Sometimes when I talk about my son, I get very emotional," he explained. "So bear with me."

Earl divides his life into two distinct phases, the first of which he now considers to have been a divinely directed training mission for the second. In the first phase, which began during the Great Depression, he grew up poor in eastern Kansas, lost both parents by the time he was thirteen, attended a mostly white high school, became the first black baseball player in what is today the Big Twelve, spent twenty years in the Army, served two widely separated tours of duty in Vietnam (the second as a Green Beret), and endured an increasingly loveless marriage for the sake of his three children, to whom he was a remote father at best. In the second phase, which began in the late sixties, he divorced his first wife, married a Thai receptionist named Kultida Punswad (whom he had met in Thailand during his second Southeast Asian tour), took up golf, and produced Tiger Woods—whose real first name is Eldrick, and whose nickname Earl had given first to a South Vietnamese lieutenant colonel named Vuong Dang Phong, who was his colleague, close friend, and protector during the war.

Earl was determined to be a better parent to the last of his four children than he had been to the first three, and after he retired from the Army, in 1974, he had more time to be attentive. His one significant distraction—other than his job, as a contract administrator and materials manager at McDonnell Douglas, in Huntington Beach, California—was golf, a game at which he had become remarkably proficient despite having taken it up just four years earlier, at the age of forty-two. He worked on his swing in the evenings, by hitting balls into a net in his garage, and he often placed his infant son in a high chair beside him so that the two of them could commune while he practiced. "It was a way of spending time together," he told me recently. The baby, far from being bored, was captivated by the motion. One momentous day, when Tiger was still young enough not to have mastered all the finer points of walking, he astonished his father by climbing down from his high chair, picking up a club, and executing a passable imitation of Earl's (quite good) golf swing. At that moment, his father realized he was the steward of an extraordinary talent.

Earl also began to believe that the birth of his son had been—as he told the St. John congregation—"the plan of the man upstairs." Looking back on his life, he detected a pattern of trials and tests and close escapes from tragedy, and he decided that God had been grooming him all along for something big. As the child grew, Earl was struck more and more by what he described in church that day as "the charismatic power that resides in my son Tiger"—a power that he had otherwise noticed only in Nelson Mandela.

Even to someone sitting in a church



"The body is eighty-two-per-cent broth."

pew, this might sound sort of mystical and wacky—and yet the more you learn about Tiger Woods's preternatural relationship to the game of golf the easier it becomes to understand why terrestrial interpretations seem inadequate to Earl. When Tiger was still a toddler, Earl says, the child was able to identify the swing flaws of adult players. (" 'Look, Daddy,' Tiger would say, 'that man has a reverse pivot!' ") Tiger putted with Bob Hope on the "Mike Douglas Show" at the age of two, broke 50 for nine holes at the age of three, hit golf balls on "That's Incredible!" at the age of five, and received his first autograph request when he was still too young to have a signature. Before he had learned to count to ten, Earl says, Tiger could tell you, on any golf hole, where each member of a foursome stood in relation to par. While his grade-school contemporaries drew pictures of racing cars and robots, Tiger sketched the trajectories of his irons. He came from behind to win the Junior World Championship, in San Diego, against an international field, when he was eight.

Tiger first beat his father in golf, by a single stroke, with a score of 71, when he was eleven. That same summer, he entered thirty-three junior tournaments, and won them all. ("That's when I peaked. It's been downhill since.") At fifteen, he became the youngest player ever to win the United States Junior Amateur Championship—and then the only player in history to win it three years in a row. At eighteen, he became the youngest player ever to win the United States Amateur Championship—and then the only player in history to win it three years in a row.

When Tiger first began to attract national attention, people often assumed that the real force behind his game must be the oldest one in modern sports: a pushy father with frustrated athletic aspirations and a powerful yearning for unearned income. In early 1998, the sportswriter John Feinstein published a short, mean-spirited book called "The First Coming," in which he compared Earl to the manipulative father of the tennis prodigy Jennifer Capriati, who burned out on the women's tour at seventeen. (She has since returned.) But Feinstein was clearly wrong. It has gradually become apparent that Tiger's drive has always been internal, and that while Earl and Kultida may have been its facilitators they were not its authors. When Tiger was still very small, for example, he memorized his father's office telephone number so that he could call Earl each afternoon to ask if the two of them could practice at the golf course after work. Earl was a tireless (and innovative) practice companion and coach, but he believed that the initiative must always be taken by the boy.

Rather than pushing their son, the Woodses sometimes worried that his infatuation with golf was eclipsing other parts of his life. "In junior golf, I was all-out," Tiger said in Oklahoma. "My parents would say, 'You can't play, you're playing too much.' But I wanted to play every tournament, and play twice in one day." Earl repeatedly urged him, with little success, to try other sports. Kultida used golf as an incentive—for example, by forbidding her son to hit practice balls until he had finished his homework. ("My wife was the disciplinarian in the family," Earl told me, "and I was the friend.") Earl once fretted that Tiger was so focussed on winning that he had ceased to enjoy himself on the golf course. Tiger replied curtly, "That's how I enjoy myself, by shooting low scores." After that, Earl kept his opinions to himself.

Although Earl and Kultida did not force Tiger to become a golfer, they both made enormous sacrifices to help him realize his ambition. Earl estimates that the family's annual travel expenses during Tiger's junior-golf years amounted to as much as thirty thousand dollars, a sum Earl couldn't have covered without the help of a succession of home-equity loans. Kultida was an infinitely patient chauffeur, rising long before dawn to drive Tiger to distant tournaments (and reminding him to bring his pillow so that he could go back to sleep in the car). Both parents believed that their son's needs must always come before their own, and they were determined that the only impediment to his success—in golf or in whatever other field he might choose to pursue—would be the level of his own desire.

Earl and Kultida's sacrifices took a toll on their marriage; they have lived apart for several years now, although they have not divorced. Their living arrangement inevitably comes to mind when Earl says, as he did in church in Oklahoma that day, "The family is the most important institution in the world." But Earl doesn't view his own domestic situation as conflicting with his beliefs. The family as Earl conceives it is mainly a relationship between parents and their children. He told me recently, "Tiger has a mother and a father who love him

WAITER, THERE'S A SYRINGE AND OTHER MEDICAL WASTE IN MY SOUP!
OUR TROUBLED CHOWDERS
ZIEGLER

dearly, and who have always supported him and always will. He is the top priority in the family. There is no bitterness between his parents, and there is no animosity. The only thing is that we live in separate places. My wife likes a great, big-ass house, and I like a small house. That's all." Still awaiting Tiger is the challenge of raising a family of his own—an achievement, Earl says, from which Tiger must not allow himself to be distracted by his golf.

Tiger's obsession was obviously indulged by his parents, but the child wasn't spoiled. Almost from the beginning, he was made to take responsibility for his own aspirations. Starting when he was quite young, for example, he was put in charge of making the family's tournament-related travel arrangements, including hotel reservations. When he was asked what he intended to study in school, he would say that he hoped to major in accounting because he wanted to know how to keep track of the people who would one day keep track of his earnings. He went by himself to check out the colleges that had recruited him, and he went by himself when it was time to enroll at Stanford, the college he ultimately chose. (Tiger's best friends today include three former Stanford teammates: Notah Begay III, who is the first full-blooded American Indian to play on the P.G.A. Tour; Casey Martin, who is physically disabled and won a court decision allowing him to use a motorized cart in P.G.A. Tour events; and Jerry Chang, to whom Tiger quietly returned a favor by serving as his caddie during a thirty-six-hole qualifying tournament the week following his own victory in the U.S. Open.)

"Honey, I still think you're the greatest."

The real purpose of the Woods family's life style, both parents have said, was not to turn Tiger into a professional golfer but to strengthen his character. "Golf prepares children for life," Earl told me recently, "because golf is a microcosm of life." According to Earl, the truly important lessons he imparted on the golf course had to do with things like honesty, etiquette, patience, and discipline—virtues for which golf provided handy talking points. (Golf is the only competitive sport, for example, in which the players call penalties on themselves.) Earl also stressed to Tiger that his athletic gift, if he continued to pursue it, would always entail outsized public obligations—not least because of his racial background. Tiger lived in a mostly white neighborhood in Cypress, California, and he attended mostly white schools, and he was sometimes harassed by bigoted bullies—one of whom tied him to a tree one day when he was in elementary school—but both his parents taught him to rise above such incidents and to understand that racism is evidence of a defect in the racist, not in the racist's victim. Kultida urged him to be remorseless in competition, but she also steeped him in the Buddhist tradition in which she herself had been raised.

It appears that Earl and Kultida provided their son with exactly what he turned out to need (competitive focus, immunity to intimidation, a cut-down 1-iron) at every critical juncture in his development. But I sometimes wonder whether Tiger didn't in some sense "create" his parents as much as they "created" him. From the moment he climbed down from that high chair, he seems to have been phenomenally well equipped—temperamentally, emotionally, intellectually—to exploit the physical gift that he was born with. Is it outlandish to wonder whether part of his genius didn't lie in an ability to inspire his parents to conduct their lives in perfect harmony with his ambition?

• •

I first saw Woods in person at the Augusta National Golf Club, in Augusta, Georgia, during the week of the 1997 Masters Tournament. He had turned pro just seven months earlier, after winning his third United States Amateur Championship, and he had dominated the tour almost from that moment. I was standing near Augusta National's first tee late one afternoon early in the week when he emerged from the clubhouse to play a practice round. I didn't see him at first, but I quickly guessed that he was near, because the crowd loitering between the clubhouse and the first tee suddenly convulsed. He was moving fast, and he was encircled by guards. "Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!" The ardor of those fans I can think to describe only as ferocious. Their supplications sounded almost angry. Woods's face, meanwhile, floated expressionless among the grimaces of his protectors.

The 1997 Masters provided Woods's formal introduction not only to many golf fans but also to some of the best golfers from outside the United States. In the third round, which he began with a three-stroke lead, Woods was paired with Colin Montgomerie, who had played well enough the day before to have shared the lead himself for a short time. He was now tied for second. Montgomerie, who is Scottish, was (and still is) the best player on the European P.G.A. Tour, and he had been a star of the European Ryder Cup team. He had never won a tournament in the United States, but he had come close several times, and he was especially optimistic about his chances that week in Augusta.

Playing side by side with Woods, however, was a transforming experience for Montgomerie. He shot 74—a score that ordinarily wouldn't have been disastrous at that stage in a major tournament, except that Woods shot 65, and thereby increased his lead over the field to nine strokes, and his lead over Montgomerie to twelve. When their round was over, Montgomerie was taken to the press building for a postmortem, as the top players always are. He looked frazzled and discouraged as he stepped onto the stage, and he didn't wait for anyone to ask a question.

"All I have to say is one brief comment today," he began. "There is no chance. We're all human beings here, but there's no chance humanly possible that Tiger is going to lose this tournament. No way."

"What makes you say that?" a reporter asked.

Montgomerie looked at the reporter with palpable incredulity. "Have you just come in?" he said. "Or have you been away? Have you been on holiday or something?"

Montgomerie was clearly shaken by what he had witnessed at close quarters. In his encounter with Tiger Woods, he had crossed from the first stage to the second stage in the process described by Emily Dickinson as "First Chill—then Stupor—then the Letting Go." In the fourth and final round, he shot 81, a dismal score, which left him in a tie for thirtieth place. When he finished, he looked as though his body had been drained of blood.

Weekend golfers who attend professional tournaments for the first time are almost always struck by the breathtaking quality of the pros' shots, and they end up realizing sadly that pro-

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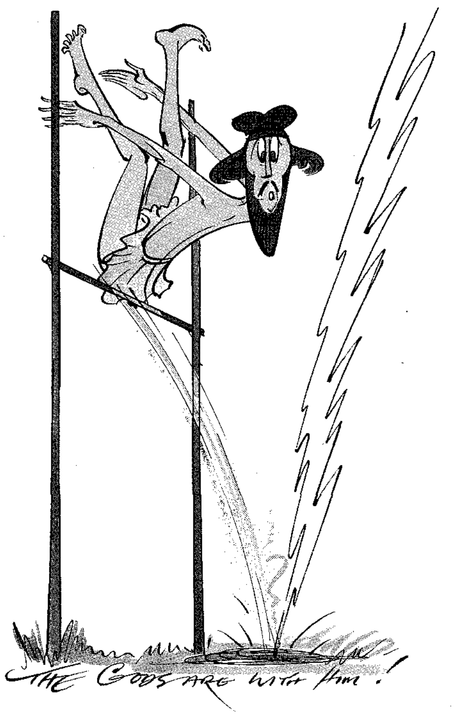
SKETCHBOOK BY
GERALD SCARFE

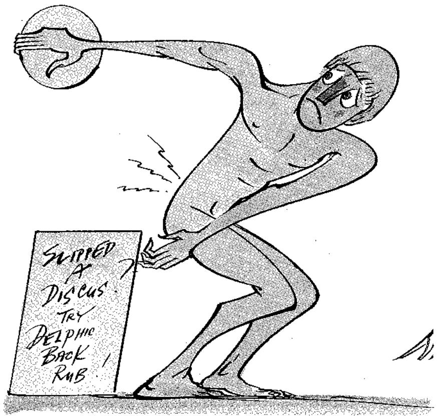
GREEK PLAY


THE GODS ARE WITH HIM!

To: Head of Sports Programming, NBS.

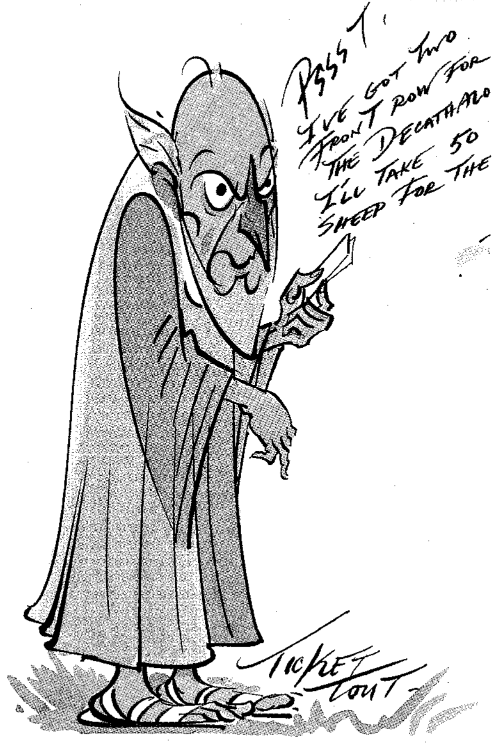
From: Department of Viewer Containment.

Word here is that you folks are all in a sweat about what to put up against the Olympics. Well, sweat no more. Our people have come up with a surefire winner. Every four years, some blowhard is sure to blather on about "returning to the original spirit of the Olympics"—you know, no rough stuff between nations for the duration. Well, how about returning to the original *practice* of the Olympics instead? Rough stuff? You betcha. I'm talking raw, I'm talking ancient. I'm talking "Survivor" meets "Gladiator"—our network's very own *classical* Olympiad.

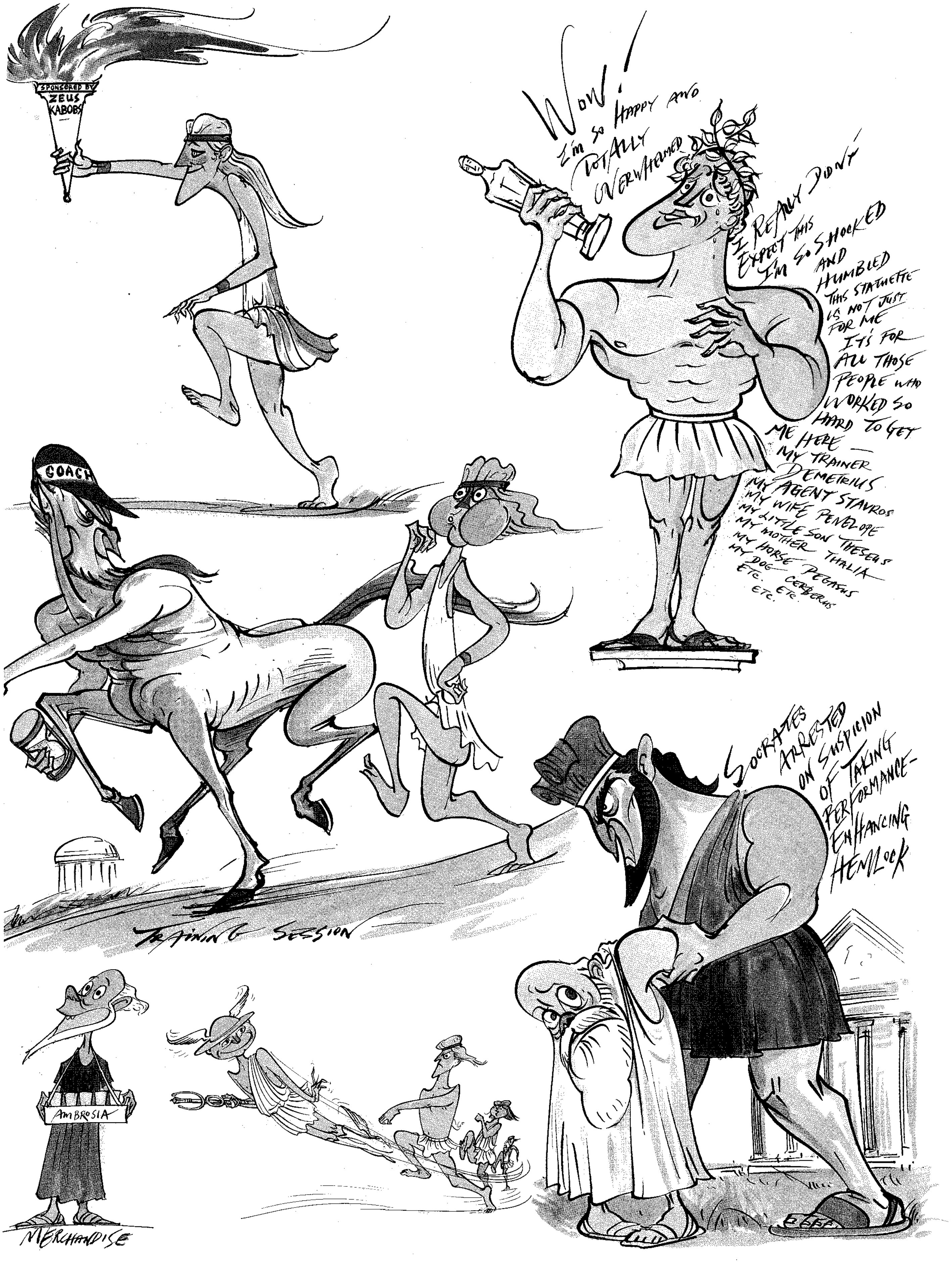

SLIPPED A DISCUS? TRY DELPHIC BACK RUB!

Boy, did they know about spectator sports in 735 B.C. For one thing, anybody caught in a false start was handed over to the Games cops—the *alytes*—for an immediate public flogging. Now, that's a solid-gold crowd-pleaser. And there were none of those wussy gloves for the boxers: just bare fists and leather knuckledusters. And, best of all—get this!—the athletes performed in the buff, lathered in olive oil. In the beginning, they wore shorts. Then, it seems, one hotshot sprinter tripped over his own boxers and blew the race. After that, it was a level playing field and caution to the wind.

It'll be red meat for the advertisers. Our research team says that, according to this old guy Pausanias, who used to cover the games, athletes swore "upon slices of boar's flesh that in nothing will they sin against the Olympic Games." Breakfast of champions, right? And don't worry about the sacrifice of a hundred oxen. We can cut straight to the broiled patties. That Olympic flame had to be there for *some* reason.


PSST! I'VE GOT TWO FRONT ROW FOR THE DECATHALO I'LL TAKE 50 SHEEP FOR THE
TICKET TOUT

—*Simon Schama*

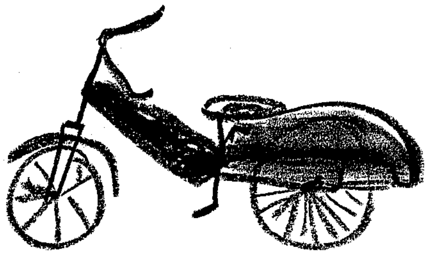

SPONSORED BY ZEUS KABOBS
WOW! I'm so HAPPY AND TOTALLY OVERWHELMED
I REALLY DIDN'T EXPECT THIS I'M SO SHOCKED AND HUMBLED THIS STATUETTE IS NOT JUST FOR ME IT'S FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO WORKED SO HARD TO GET ME HERE — MY TRAINER DEMETRIUS MY AGENT STAVROS MY WIFE PENELOPE MY LITTLE SON THESEUS MY MOTHER THALIA MY HORSE PEGASUS MY DOG CERBERUS ETC. ETC. ETC.
COACH
TRAINING SESSION
SOCRATES ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF TAKING PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING HEMLOCK
AMBROSIA
MERCHANDISE

fessional golf and weekend golf, despite superficial similarities, are very different games. I had been to tournaments before the 1997 Masters, and I had even played golf with a couple of touring pros, so I had no remaining illusions about my own abilities. But some of Woods's golf shots during that tournament seemed almost as different from an average pro's shots as an average pro's shots would seem from mine. They belonged in a category of their own. David Feherty, a former tour player from Ireland, who now works mainly as a television commentator, told me recently, "I've played with just about everybody, and I think I can say now that Tiger has hit virtually every truly great shot I've ever seen. As we speak, he is deleting some of my greatest memories and replacing them with his. He simply does things other golfers can't do. He's like the Heineken in the commercial: he refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach."

Woods's swing is so powerful that it is difficult to capture on film. For many years, *Golf Digest* has published detailed photographic sequences that anatomize the swings of the game's best players—sequences that are descended in spirit from the studies of running athletes and galloping horses which were made in the late nineteenth century by the photographic pioneer Eadweard Muybridge. Since 1973, the magazine's photographers have shot their swing sequences with a high-speed camera called a Hulcher, which was originally developed, at the request of a government agency, to take stop-action photographs of missiles. The camera can shoot hundreds of high-quality images at a rate of sixty-five frames a second—plenty fast enough to break a golf swing into its constituent parts.

Woods performed for the Hulcher a few months after his Masters victory. The camera recorded fifteen driver swings from five different angles. When the prints came back from the lab, the magazine's editors discovered that only five frames among the hundreds taken during the shoot had captured Woods's swing at the approximate moment his club head came into contact with the ball—a problem they had never encountered before. "With other tour players, we almost always get a picture of impact with every swing," Roger Schiffman, the executive editor, told me. When Woods makes his normal swing, the head of his driver moves at about a hundred and twenty miles an hour—a good fifteen miles an hour faster than the club head of a typical touring pro, and about thirty miles an hour faster than the club head of an average amateur. Between one Hulcher frame and the next, Woods's driver travelled through roughly two hundred degrees of arc, which means that a ball sitting unthreatened on the tee in one frame would be long gone by the next.

That *Golf Digest* swing sequence was photographed two days before the start of the 1997 Western Open, which Woods went on to win. "When he saw the pictures later, he said, 'No wonder I won,'" Schiffman told me. "He said his swing looked almost perfect." It was quite a surprise, therefore, when Woods decided not long afterward that his game required a major overhaul. With the help of Butch Harmon, a former touring pro who has been Woods's teacher since he was seventeen, Woods spent more than a year taking apart his "almost perfect" swing and putting it back together.



The eyes of non-golfers glaze over when golfers fret about their swing, as they do when offered the least opportunity. If you play golf, though, you understand the fascination. The golf swing may be the most frustrating motion in sports. It's all angles and levers and timing and voodoo, and, because it starts from a dead stop and is directed at a stationary object, it permits, and even

THE GAME

No ball, no rules. Any one boy
On the cinder playground
Raises his hand and yells I Got It
And a few others chase him reaching
To touch him and the great
Game begins.

At first maybe four or five
Charge after him and one tags him
And yells I Got It and then more
Join the pack lunging after the new
Leader, the pursued one
Who sprints and dodges, head-feints
Nearly out of breath, writhing
Out of reach.

No end, no score.
Thrill of the broken-field run in football, but
Pure: no boundaries, no goal.

No teams. Aristocratic martial
Rhythm of anarchy and brilliance,
The one against the many:

I remember a heavyset boy named Carl
Who liked to keep the chain-link
Fence to his back, even
Leaning against it, side-faking or pulling

His chubby belly back, and every time a boy
Touched him, I Got It, Carl
Dancing tagged him back
With rope-a-dope hands I Got It
Back on the tagging arm, Carl
Unwinded at bay unyielding.

Sometimes the whole playground
Ran like one animal harrier
Streaming after you,
Challengers and thwarted in turn
Hounded and hounding, with grins
Like tired hounds.

And after the exhilarated spell
As the fox, the defiant
Scapegoat who dares all comers,

Always finally out of breath
You laugh and let yourself
Be touched, collapse thrilled
And exhausted to crouch panting
Hands on knees as you watch the herd
Speed on after the twisting shifting
Hero sooner or later always depleted
Of strength, unpetulant, capitulated
To the great ongoing
Entropy of the game.

—*Robert Pinsky*

encourages, a dangerous level of intellectual interference. Most athletic actions work best when the attention of the athletes executing them is directed somewhere else—on a rapidly approaching tennis ball, for example, or on the footsteps of a furious linebacker—but golf is a highly self-conscious game. As a result, golf instruction often veers in the direction of pop psychology, and the advice offered in countless books, magazines, videos, infomercials, television shows, and weeklong swing schools can begin to seem slightly oracular. ("Swing easy as hard as you can"; "Don't be tight"; "Don't be loose"; "You can play well with a bad swing as long as you make an even number of errors.") Golf is so unnerving that longtime players are susceptible to a host of bizarre and virtually incurable mental disorders, among them a putting problem known as "the yips," and a calamitous swing breakdown known as "the shanks"—a condition so devastating that many golfers superstitiously refuse to utter its name.

At the Ryder Cup in 1993—which was held at a club in northwest England called the Belfry—I stood by the driving range for half an hour while the British player Nick Faldo worked on swing minutiae with his teacher, David Leadbetter. Faldo would address a ball, then sweep his club halfway to the top of his backswing and freeze; Leadbetter would modify the position of Faldo's hands by an inch or so; Faldo would re-address the ball, then sweep his club halfway to the top of his backswing and freeze; Leadbetter would modify the position of Faldo's hands by an inch or so. They repeated this exercise again and again and again. (The real proof that golfers are mentally unbalanced was provided not by Faldo and Leadbetter but by me: I stood there and watched. And took notes!) For most players, this sort of incessant meddling is necessary yet perilous. Faldo himself suffered a swing collapse a few years ago, and, indeed, he is still trying to rediscover his old touch.

Woods's dissatisfaction with his swing in 1997 therefore seemed, to an outsider, almost reckless—especially since it concerned a problem that is beyond the ability of most golfers to conceive of as a problem. I saw an example of this dissatisfaction once in a tournament on TV. Woods had driven his ball beautifully on a par-4, leaving himself just a short iron to the green—an easy shot. He swung, and his ball soared through the air, and, sure enough, it ended up just a few feet from the hole. (He later sank that putt, for a birdie.) But Woods reacted as angrily as if he had just bounced his ball off a car in the clubhouse parking lot.

He later revealed what had bothered him. He had intended to play a fade—that is, a shot that starts left of the target and curves back toward it, to the right. At some point during his downswing, however, he had sensed that his club was in the wrong position in relation to his body, so he manipulated his hands in such a way that the club head rolled over at the bottom of his swing, imparting side spin to the ball in the opposite direction and causing the shot to curve from right to left instead—a shot known as a draw. Because of the speed of his swing, and the time it takes for electrical impulses to travel back and forth through the human nervous system, that sort of midcourse correction, given its end result, is almost impossible to comprehend. In any event, Woods didn't like having to rely on his hands to twist his club into the right position, so he decided the time had come to tighten up his swing. That process took more than a year, and it coincided with the only relative dry spell in his career thus far—a period, which ended late in 1999, during which he won only a tournament or two. Since then, he's won roughly half the tournaments he's played in.

I won't bore you with the details of how Woods and Harmon did it—and the details are definitely boring—but the process included hitting thousands upon thousands of practice balls, enduring countless hours of tedious drills, and adding several brick-size slabs of muscle to what was already a virtually fat-free physique. Woods has always loved to practice, and he is a fascinated and deeply analytical observer of his own swing. "He is the best student I ever had," Harmon told me recently. "He is like a sponge—he soaks up information, and he always wants to learn and get better." That notion is deeply disturbing to other tour players, who had more than enough trouble with the old Woods—the one with the allegedly terrible swing. Even worse, Harmon describes his student as "a work in progress," and they both say that the Woods we have seen so far is only seventy-five per cent as good as the Woods they both believe we will see at some point in the future—and probably sooner rather than later. "He can get a lot better," Harmon told me. "Scary thought."

"I've worked countless hours," Woods himself said shortly before his Oklahoma exhibition (during which he demonstrated a new low-flying shot with his driver which he and Harmon had spent a year developing specifically for the hard fairways and high winds of the British Open). "People have no idea how many hours I've put into this game—and they don't really need to know, either—but I've put in a lot of time and a lot of effort. My dad always told me that there are no shortcuts, that you get out of it what you put into it, and that if you want to become the best you're going to have to be willing to pay your dues."

In paying his dues and becoming the best, Woods has changed almost everything there is to change about golf. The conventional wisdom among sportswriters used to be that the P.G.A. Tour had become so deep in talent that no modern player could hope to dominate it the way Palmer or Nicklaus or Watson did in the sixties and seventies and eighties, or the way Snead or Nelson or Hogan did in the thirties and forties and fifties. Now, though, Woods becomes the favorite in any tournament simply by signing up, and professional golfers all over the world have begun lifting heavier weights, eating healthier food, and going to bed earlier, in the hope of becoming good enough to be considered second best. "He's in their heads," the sportswriter Tom Callahan told me. Callahan recalled the corrective eye surgery that Woods had last year. "The first thing he said afterward was 'The hole looks bigger.' Now, if you're Davis Love, is that what you want to hear?" More than a few pros once viewed Woods as dangerously overhyped; nowadays, like most of the rest of his awestruck admirers, they tend to stop what they are doing and watch—perhaps thinking ahead to a day when they'll be able to brag to their grandchildren that they once got personally whomped by the "Chosen One" (as the tour player Mark Calcavecchia called him at the British Open).

Woods has also changed golf's public image, which has suffered for decades from the game's suburban association with saddle shoes, cigars, and miniature electric cars. "Golf was called a wussy sport when I was growing up," he said in Oklahoma. "You weren't supposed to play it unless you were a wuss." No longer. Twelve-year-olds who used to dream only of becoming professional basketball players now sometimes decide that they might like to give the P.G.A. Tour a try, too, at least in the off-season. Tubby middle-aged hackers now stand a little taller at cocktail parties, because Woods, miracle of miracles, has made golf seem kind of cool. When a teen-age checker at my local grocery store discovered that I played a lot of golf, her eyes lit up, and she asked, "Have you met Tiger?" Woods has even taken the most shameful aspect of the game's long history—its legacy as a decadent pastime for white people with too much time on their hands—and turned it inside out.

Between 1934 and 1961, the constitution of the Professional Golfers Association of America—the direct predecessor of the modern P.G.A. Tour—explicitly limited that organization's membership to "Professional golfers of the Caucasian race." The Caucasian-only clause was not some esoteric historical artifact; the rule merely formalized a policy that had always been followed, and the P.G.A. apparently bothered to put it on paper only after discovering that a light-skinned black man had managed to work as a club pro since 1928. The P.G.A. methodically fought efforts by black players to overturn or circumvent the rule, and it didn't amend its constitution until it was forced to do so by the Attorney General of California, who threatened to ban tour events in that state and to encourage other Attorneys General to do the same. The pressure for change did not come from the white pros of that era; the vast majority of those men were happy with their world the way it was.

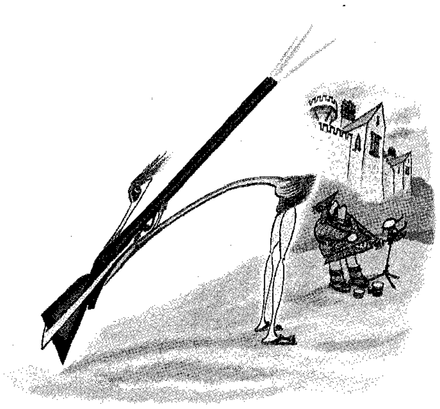
When Tiger Woods was born, in 1975, the Caucasian-only clause was no more distant in time than the stock-market crash of 1987 is from today—and the mind-set that had fostered it was very much a part of the landscape of golf. One winter in the early seventies, when I was in high school, someone from the Midwestern country club that my parents belonged to asked me to suggest other young people who might be invited to the club's upcoming Christmas dance. I in turn asked what would happen if my list included the names of one or two of the three black members of my high-school class. Shortly afterward, the dance was cancelled.

Less than nine months before Woods's birth, Lee Elder became the first black golfer to play in the Masters. Elder's appearance at Augusta has been celebrated ever since as an early milestone in the drearily slow enlightenment of white Americans, but it did not herald a new generation of black golfers. Like most of the few other black tour players of that time, Elder was a veteran of the old United Golfers Association, golf's equivalent of baseball's Negro leagues, and his athletic prime was mostly behind him. (He was already forty-one.) A black player named Calvin Peete, who was born in 1943 and took up golf too late to have been involved with the U.G.A, became one of the truly dominant players on the P.G.A. Tour in the eighties, a decade during which he won more tournaments (eleven) than any player except Tom Kite. But Peete was virtually the end of the line; Woods is the only black member of the P.G.A. Tour, and he is the first in a very long time. In the past fifteen years, only one African-American golfer has won a P.G.A. Tour card by way of the tour's qualifying "school" (actually, a notoriously arduous six-day tournament). That was a now forgotten player named Adrian Stills, who qualified in 1985. "We're a dying breed," Lee Elder told me last month.

Why did the black presence on tour shrink to the vanishing point between the mid-seventies and the mid-nineties, just when one would have expected the opposite? Pete McDaniel—who is the author of "Uneven Lies," a cultural history of black golf in America, which will be published this fall—recently told

THE SPORTING LIFE

Skeet shooting.



ARNOLD ROTH

When I went to Scotland for a friend's wedding last summer, I didn't plan on firing a gun. Getting into a fistfight, maybe; hurling insults about badly dressed bridesmaids, of course; but I didn't expect to shoot or get shot at. The wedding was taking place in a medieval castle in a speck of a village called Biggar. There was not a lot to do in Biggar, but the caretaker of the castle had skeet-shooting gear, and the male guests announced that before the rehearsal dinner they were going to give it a go. The women were advised to knit or shop or something. I don't know if any of us women actually wanted to join them, but we didn't want to be left out, so we insisted on coming along.

We were not outfitted like an Edwardian shooting party. One woman was in a denim minidress with red-white-and-blue platform shoes. Another was wearing pedal pushers and wobbly pumps. I was in something lightweight and sleeveless and was tripping around in rubber flip-flops. The caretaker must have been horrified by the sight of us. He had small dark eyes and a tragic manner and was wearing a proper field jacket with suède patches in the right places. He handled his gun with a wary tenderness, as if it were a baby alligator; it was about the size of one, with a double barrel and a thick wooden stock. None of us had ever done this before. We were gunless, gun-fearing city people, writers and filmmakers and art historians—sissies, in fact, who cringed when the caretaker raised the shotgun, wordlessly indicating that it was time to begin. He muttered a few instructions, then held out the gun, waiting. No one stepped up. After a moment, we turned on the bridegroom and shoved him forward.

It was just one of those things—dumb luck, probably—but the bridegroom had perfect aim, and he exploded the clay pigeon into a million pieces. The caretaker nodded and released another pigeon, and again the groom hit the target. It was inspiring. We all crowded up to take our turns. The guest in platform shoes went next, and missed by a mile. An usher in Ray Bans winged a few. One bridesmaid had perfect form but a hot finger on the trigger.

Finally, it was my turn. I hadn't expected to like the feel of the gun, but I did: it was warm and smooth and knee-bucklingly heavy, with two triggers that were set so far apart that they might have been fitted for a giant's handspan. The caretaker sized me up and then spoke quietly. "You want to hold it as tight against your shoulder as you can," he said. "It has a very powerful recoil."

I squeezed the gun against my body.

"Tighter," he said.

"That's as tight as I can get it."

"A little tighter."

I have never been kicked by a mule, so I can only imagine that it would feel a little like the gun slamming into me after I fired. My teeth rattled, and my head rang like a school bell. I was hysterically excited, as breathless and thrilled as if I'd just robbed a bank. Having missed, I begged for another shot. The caretaker released another pigeon, and I followed it, my arm aching from the weight of the gun and the shock of the recoil. I missed again, but I was close. The second recoil was just as bad as the first. I shot again and again and again, sending not a single clay pigeon to its reward, but each time getting closer. Me! Firing a double-barrelled shotgun! And I couldn't stop! The caretaker was egging me on, murmuring that if I had a gun that fit me properly I'd be hitting everything.

I didn't stop until the groom pointed out that we were being charged about a pound sterling per shot, and that at the rate I was going he wouldn't be able to afford a honeymoon. Shooting enchanted me; this is my sport, I thought. I wondered where in Manhattan I could go to fire a gun. The next morning—the day of the wedding—I woke up nearly unable to lift my arm. The bruise extended from my armpit to my elbow, and it was black and green and a deep imperial purple. I was wearing a sleeveless dress, as all the women in the wedding were, and they were all bruised to varying colors, depending on how enthusiastic they'd been about the sport. We considered covering our injuries with undereye concealer, but there was not enough to go around. Fortunately, single-malt Scotch was available in huge quantities, and by the end of the night we were showing off our bruises like tattoos.

—Susan Orlean

"Kellanay seems to be making real progress with his split-fingered fastball."

me, "It was the golf cart. The rise of the motorized golf cart marked the beginning of the end of minority golf, especially among African-Americans, because golf clubs that had carts didn't need caddies, and most of the black professional players had come from the caddie ranks." Golf carts, in addition to being a typically American response to the threat of mild physical exercise, eliminated what to golf clubs had been the unappealing necessity of maintaining on their premises large pools of mostly young, mostly disadvantaged workers. As carts displaced caddies, kids whose families were excluded from private clubs lost their principal avenue of access to the game.

Of course, a world in which a handful of black men managed to claw their way into mostly marginal professional careers as a result of having lugged the weekend baggage of wealthy whites was hardly a utopia. The real problem with golf in America, as far as race is concerned, is not that caddying declined as an occupation but that the game, over the course of more than a century, has only grudgingly made room for more than a privileged few. Given the inexorability of the cultural forces at work, it seems almost unbelievable that Tiger Woods emerged as a golfer at all, much less as a golfer who has a decent chance of one day being remembered as the greatest of all time. As Earl says, his son is the first "naturally born and bred black professional golfer"—the first whose initial exposure to the game did not come through the service entrance. For Woods simply to have earned a tour card and kept it for a couple of years would have made him a pioneer. Doing what he has actually done moves him into the category of myth.

Woods's own views about race are attractively complicated. He dislikes being referred to as "African-American," because he regards that term as an insult to his mother—and so does his mother—who, after all, is Asian. Earl's ancestors were black, white, American Indian, and Asian, and Tiger once referred to his own ethnicity as "Caublinasian," a word he made up in an effort to suggest the diversity of his genealogy. He often seems inclined to concentrate on golf and let American race relations look after themselves, but he has invested a great deal of his increasingly scarce and valuable time in reaching out to disadvantaged children through his clinics.

Woods has been conducting clinics for young golfers since he was in high school, when he and Earl set up exhibitions in cities where Woods was playing in tournaments. The clinics ended when Woods was at Stanford, because the National Collegiate Athletic Association held that they were in violation of a rule concerning individual college athletes and public exhibitions. (Earl and Tiger had several running battles with the N.C.A.A. during Tiger's two years in college, and Earl says those battles contributed to Tiger's decision to turn pro shortly after the beginning of what would have been his junior year.) After Woods left the aegis of the N.C.A.A., late in 1996, he and Earl established the Tiger Woods Foundation to continue their mission.

The foundation has been accused by some of creating unrealistic expectations among children who have limited opportunities for becoming even recreational golfers, and virtually no chance at all of becoming touring pros. ("You wonder if it's false hope," a skeptical sportswriter said to me recently.) What good does it do—the critics have asked—to introduce an inner-city kid to a game that, for all practical purposes, can't be played in an inner city? And, indeed, if the goal is to turn more members of ethnic minorities into golfers, a simpler approach might be to concentrate directly on transforming ghetto youngsters into middle-aged Republicans—the kind of people who seem to take up the game as a matter of course. There's a public-service commercial on television which shows a black child using a hammer to drive a tee into the pavement on a dark urban street, so that he can tee off in his neighborhood. Well, exactly.

Although it's true that playing on tour is an unreasonable ambition for almost everyone—the P.G.A. Tour has only a hundred and twenty-five fully exempt playing spots, and many of those are locked up by golfers whose careers will ultimately be measured in decades rather than in years—earning a different kind of living in the world of golf is within reach for many. Unlike most other spectator sports, golf is played by millions of nonprofessionals, whose needs are served by a large industry that comprises equipment manufacturers, clothing retailers, agronomists, golf-course maintenance workers, travelling salespeople, teaching professionals, scuba-diving golf-ball recyclers, and others—even journalists. Within that industry, there is now a widespread conviction that if golf is to grow significantly as an economic enterprise it needs to extend its reach far beyond white suburban males. Woods's foundation, in connection with its clinics and exhibitions, conducts seminars for children and parents in which such job opportunities are described and explained. Woods himself has estimated that as many as five per cent of the children who pass through his foundation's programs will one day end up in jobs that are somehow connected with golf. That seems like a lot, but who knows?

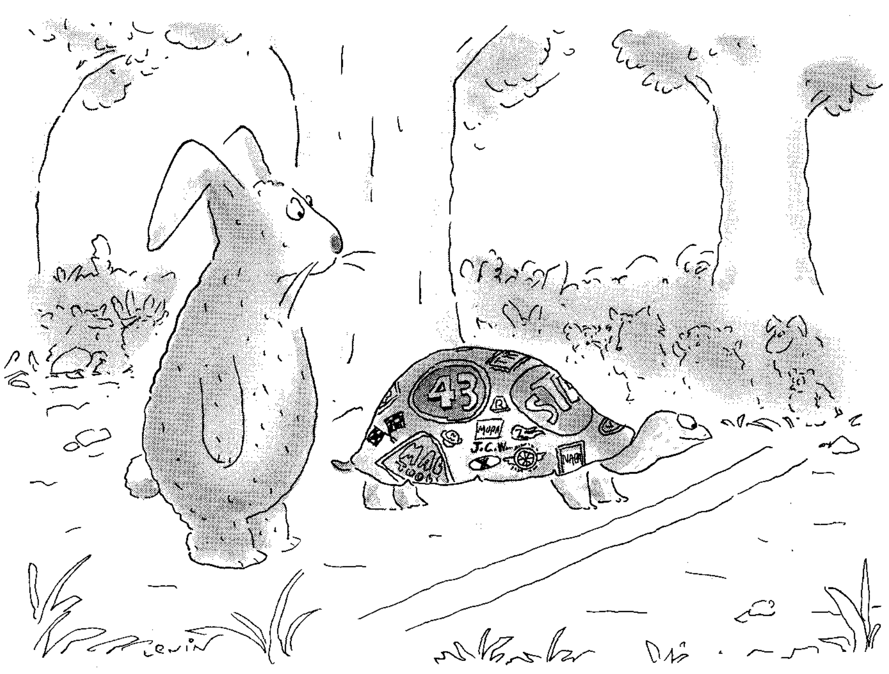
Even for kids who have no interest in golf-related careers, the game as a pastime has virtues that its more grotesque attributes have often obscured. Golf has a work ethic (the driving range and the practice green), a dress code (no jeans or T-shirts), and a tradition of etiquette based on personal responsibility and consideration for others (replace your divots). Spectator behavior that is tolerated and even encouraged in other sports—the frantic waving of plastic-foam tubes in an effort to fluster free-throw shooters in basketball games, for example—would be considered grounds for arrest at golf tournaments, where fans are expected to keep even their shadows under control. Aspiring golfers who set out to be just like Tiger Woods may never make it to the tour, but they will inevitably end up learning something about what it takes to find and keep a job more demanding than that of filling orders at a drive-through window. “The first thing they learn is to play by the rules,” Earl told me, “and we have a lot of knuckleheads in prison today who never learned to play by the rules.”

White golfers also tend to underestimate the emotional impact that Woods's racial background has had on non-Caucasians. For upper-middle-class white fans, a big part of Woods's appeal is that he seems to negate racial issues altogether—he's just Tiger, the best golfer in the world. I've seen sixty-year-old white chief-executive officers with their own personal jets who were as excited as a ten-year-old kid would be about having a chance to see Woods in person. Their excitement was genuine, and, to the extent that such a thing is possible, it was color-blind. When white golfers do think about Woods's racial background, it's often with a sense of relief: his dominance feels like an act of forgiveness, as though in a single spectacular career he could make up for the game's ugly past all by himself.

For many of the young players I saw in Oklahoma, though, Woods's appeal had everything to do with race: the color of his skin was the bridge they were crossing into the game. Dennis Burns, who works for the Tiger Woods Foundation and is one of a handful of black American golf professionals (the kind who give lessons and work at golf clubs rather than play on tour), told me, “Kids walk away from Tiger's clinics with a sense that here's a guy who looks like me and has done it. It's a feeling of confidence—and it doesn't just have to do with golf.” Children generally admire great athletes for most of the same reasons they admire cartoon superheroes: the constraints of the adult-ruled world don't seem to apply. But, for teen-agers who are outside America's cultural mainstream, Woods has meant incalculably more. He is the fearless conqueror of a world that has never wanted anything to do with them.

A lesson in fearlessness may be what professional golfers need as well. Woods has upended their universe. Ernie Els has finished second to him five times now, twice in major tournaments. Els is one of the very nicest people on any golf tour—and he has made nothing but generous, flabbergasted remarks about Woods—but surely it must have occurred to him that if Woods had spent four years at Stanford and then gone to graduate school, he himself might today be considered the best player in the world. He and the other young golfers who used to contend for that position, including Phil Mickelson and David Duval (who briefly supplanted Woods at the top of the world rankings around the time that Woods was making his big swing change), have to wonder if their moment in golf history passed before it arrived.

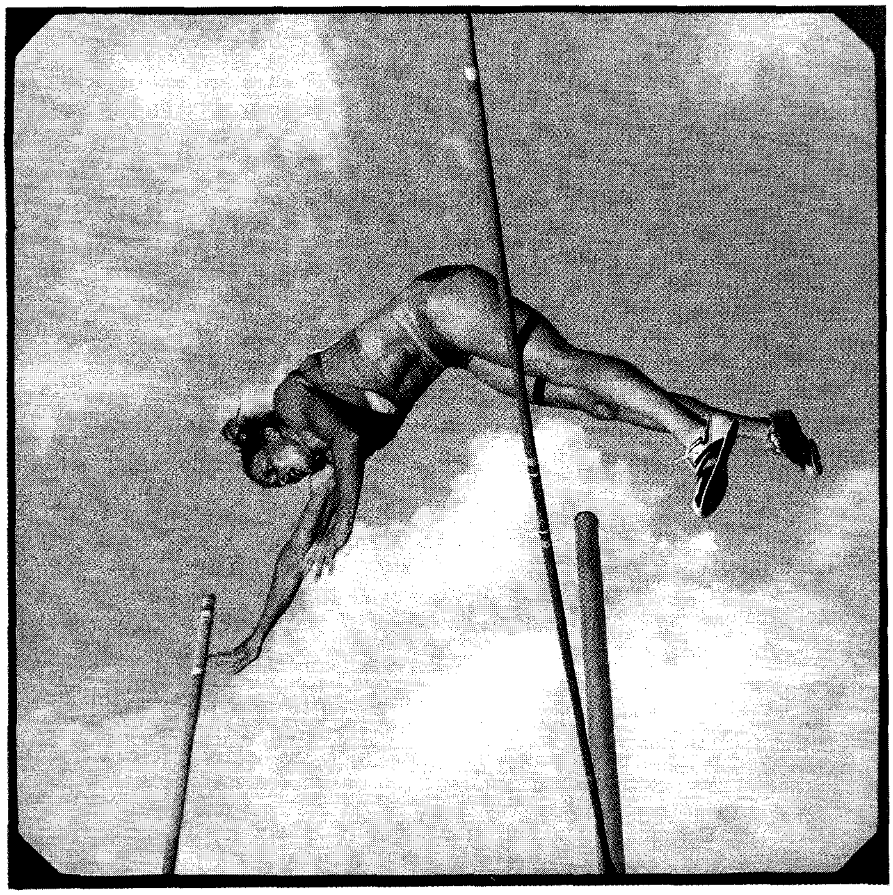
Superb athletes fascinate in part because they seem like proxies for ourselves in a metaphorical battle with the eternal: broken records are death-negating acts. Even Woods's most lopsided victories have been thrilling to watch, because his efforts have seemed so effortless—as though he had found a way to win the game that can't be won. But will we feel the same way five years from now if no player has stepped forward to challenge him? Nicklaus had the considerable advantage during his career of being chased and, not infrequently, elbowed aside by other great players, among them Arnold Palmer, Billy Casper, Gary Player, Lee Trevino, and Tom Watson. Woods's principal rival, so far, has been the record book. If that doesn't change, then those of us who can only watch—sports fans, television commentators, sports reporters—may someday come to view his triumphs with the same dispassion that he seems to feel toward us, until the passage of time erodes his powers and makes it all seem like a contest again. ♦



PORTFOLIO BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

PERFECT FORM

The bodies that fit their sport.

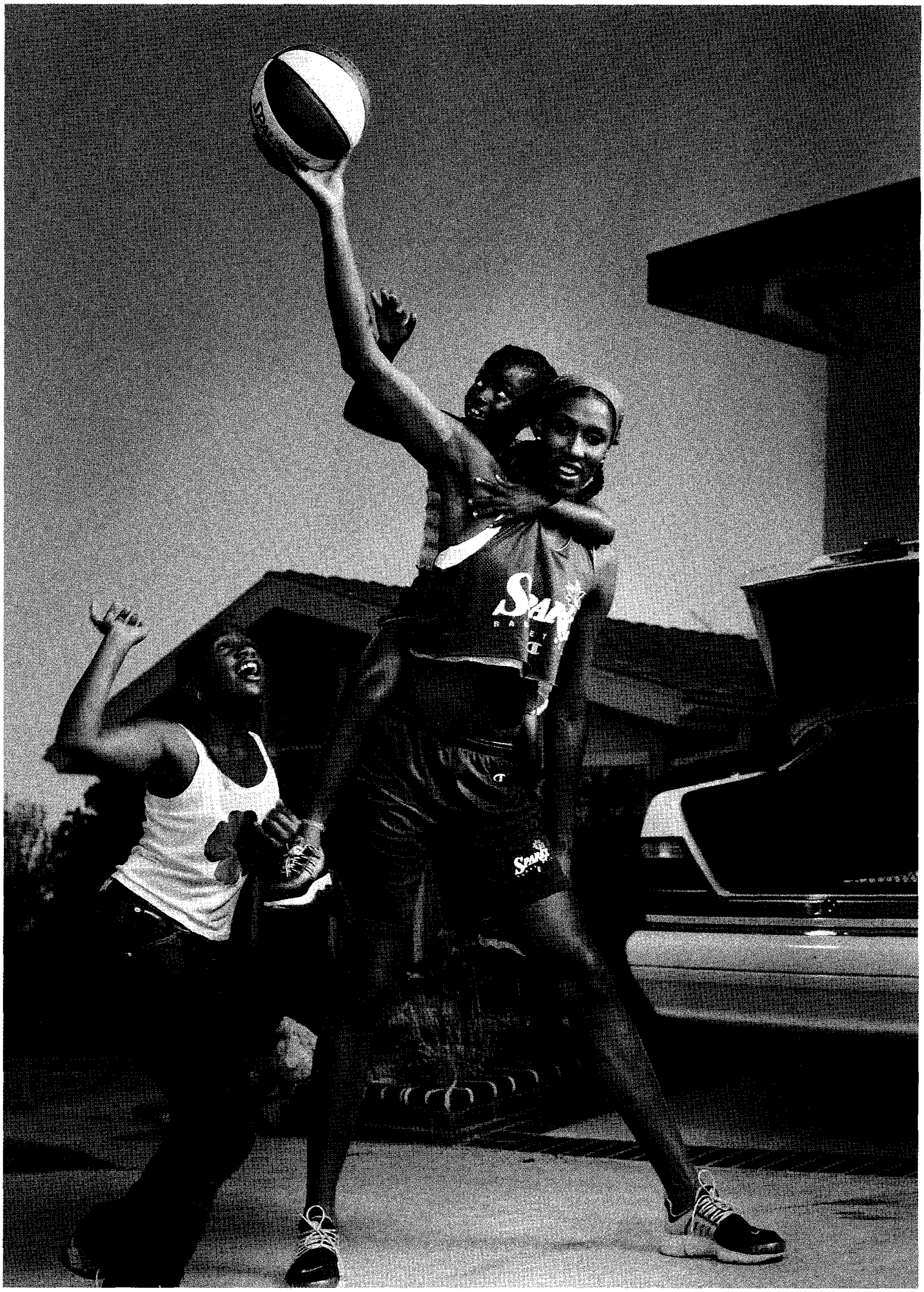


Before considering "world-class athlete" as a career choice, you might want to do a quick inventory. Long thighs? Try rowing. Big feet? Swimmer. Small and stocky? Weight lifting. Tiny and slim? Jockey or gymnast. Unremarkable in any way? There's still hope. You may have a large heart (Tour de France) or one with a previously unsuspected capacity to switch from maximum output to resting rate in seconds (biathlon, in which you ski for miles, then flop on your belly and target-shoot, pulling the trigger during the calm between heartbeats). But perhaps the best advice of all comes from Per-Olof Åstrand, the Swedish sage of exercise physiology, who counsels, "To become an Olympic athlete, choose your parents well."

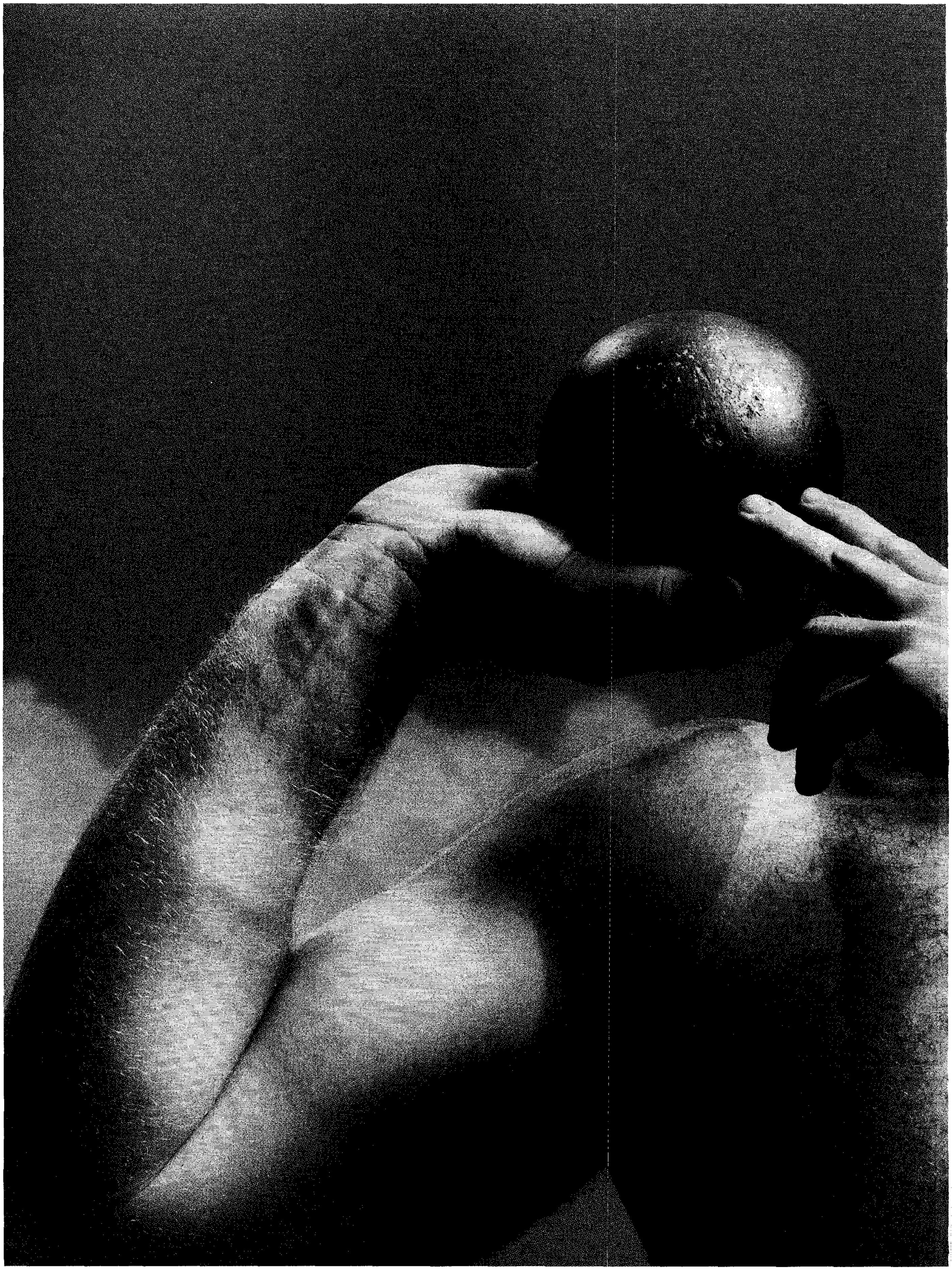
This plan is not foolproof. Even the genetically superior can end up in the wrong place: the Siberian surfer, the Sudanese ski jumper, the Amish race-car driver, and so on. But, thanks to the smorgasbord of sports played and regularly televised in the United States, potential athletes have a tremendous advantage here, and perfect specimens of every kind often find the one sporting contest that most purely expresses their genius. This coincidence of talent and opportunity would be wasted without dedication, and the athletes on the following pages have reached the peak of their pursuits through a combination of all three. The five-time Olympic gold medallist Jenny Thompson, for example, set a world record in the hundred-metre freestyle in 1992, and seven years later, long after most of her similarly gifted contemporaries had towelled off for good, she set another, in the hundred-metre butterfly.

Some initially resist their calling. Lisa Leslie, of the W.N.B.A.'s Los Angeles Sparks (at right), who was six feet tall in sixth grade, hated it when people told her she was going to be a basketball player—until the most popular girl in seventh grade asked her to join the team. "We went seven-and-oh, and I've been playing ever since," Leslie says. "I think basketball was just my destiny. It found me."

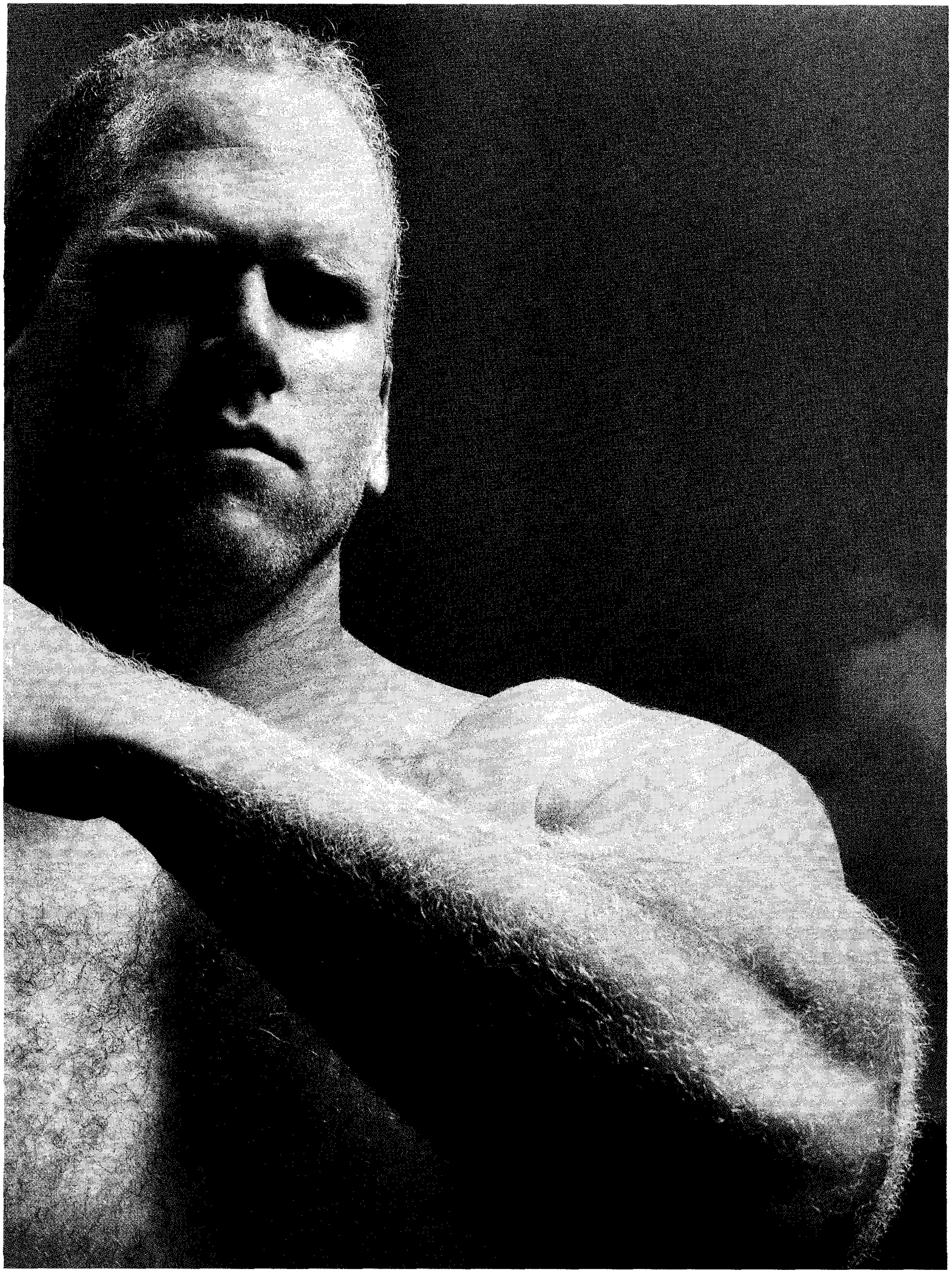
—Kevin Conley



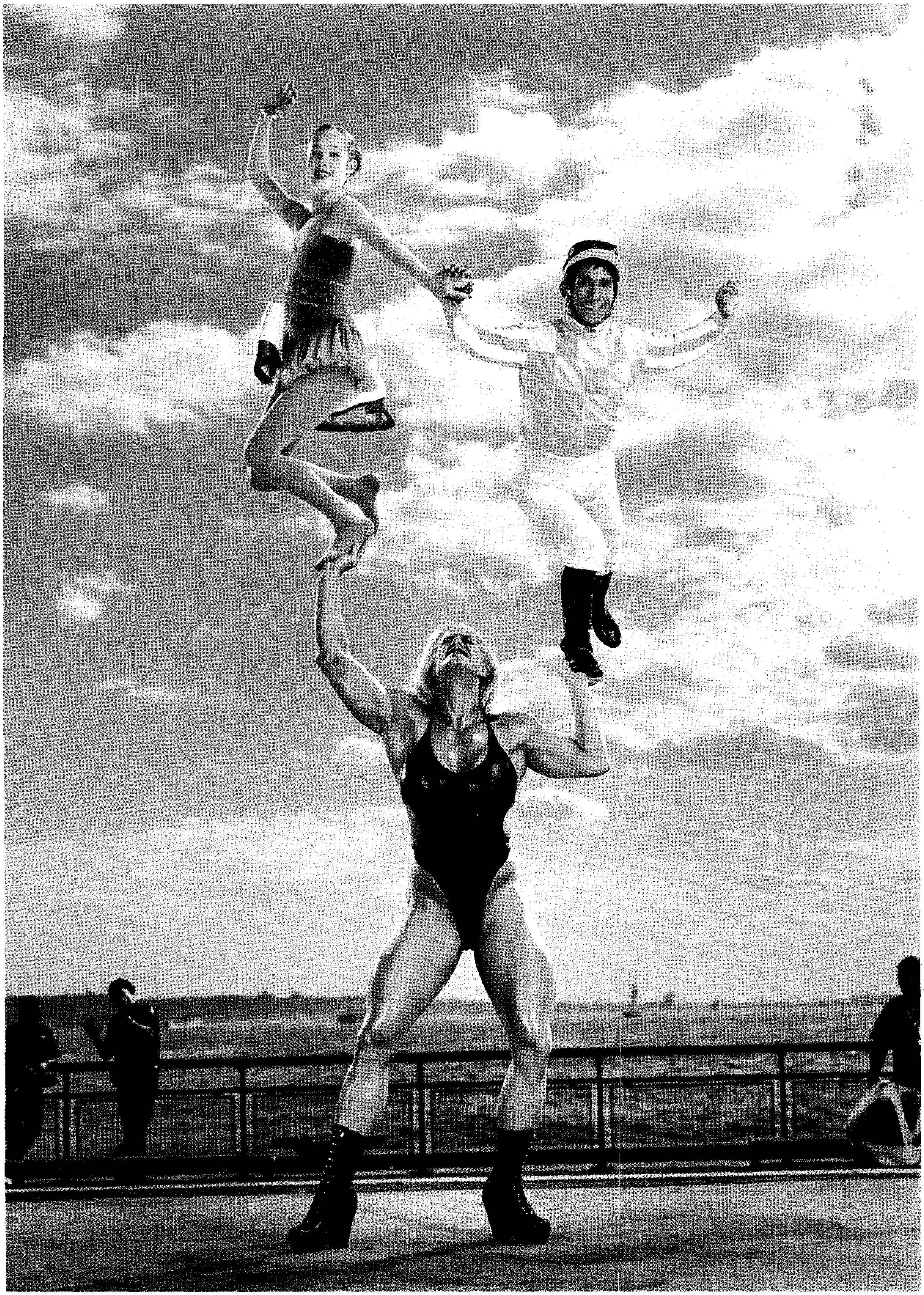
Lisa Leslie, at home with her cousin Ashley and her niece Brionne. Opposite: Tracy O'Hara, the top college pole vaulter.



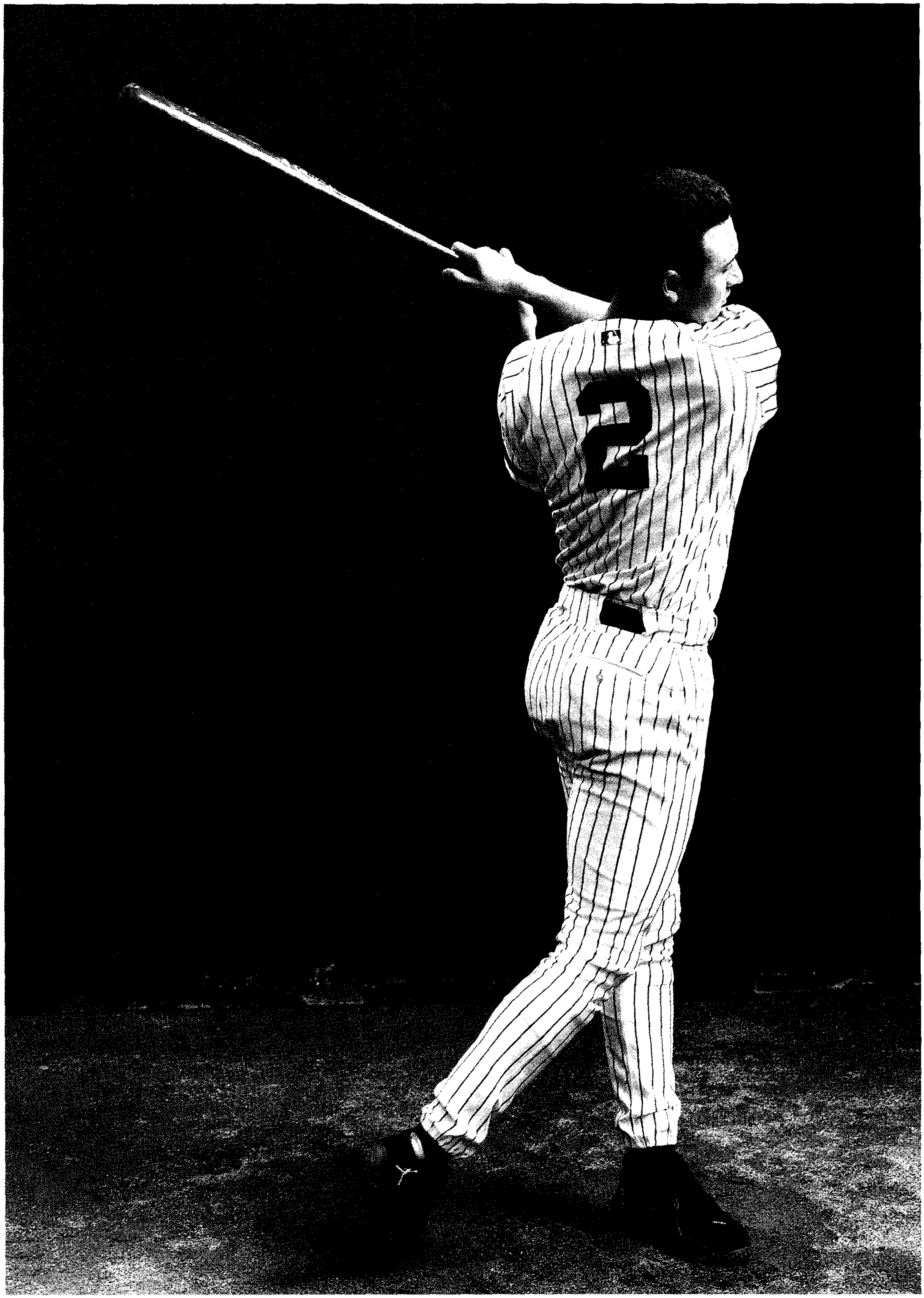
John Godina, the silver medallist in the shot put in the 1996 Olympics, and one of three discus throwers who will represent the Unitea



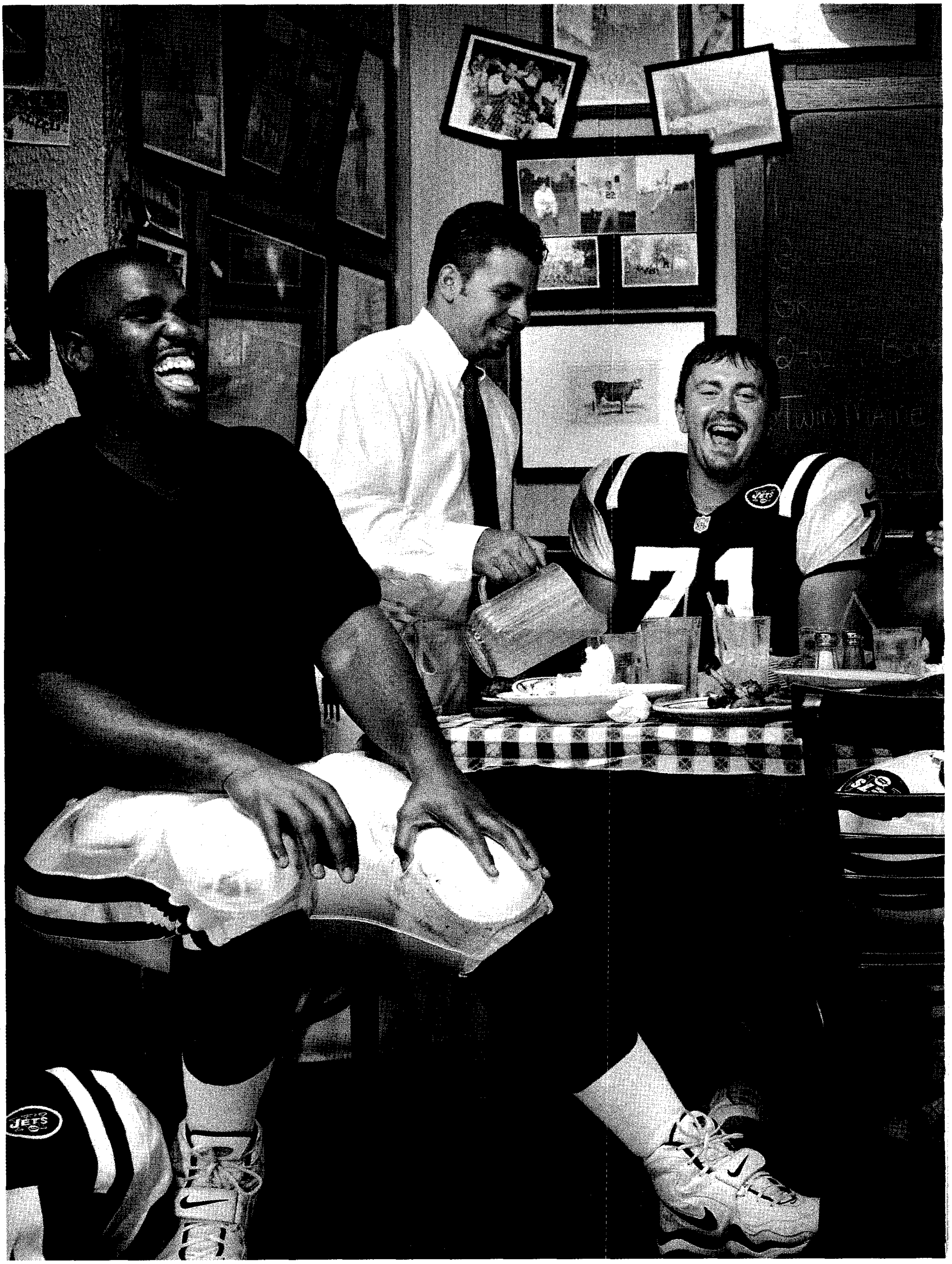
States in Sydney. His 1998 world ranking in the two events (first in shot put, third in discus) was the highest since Parry O'Brien's, in 1957.



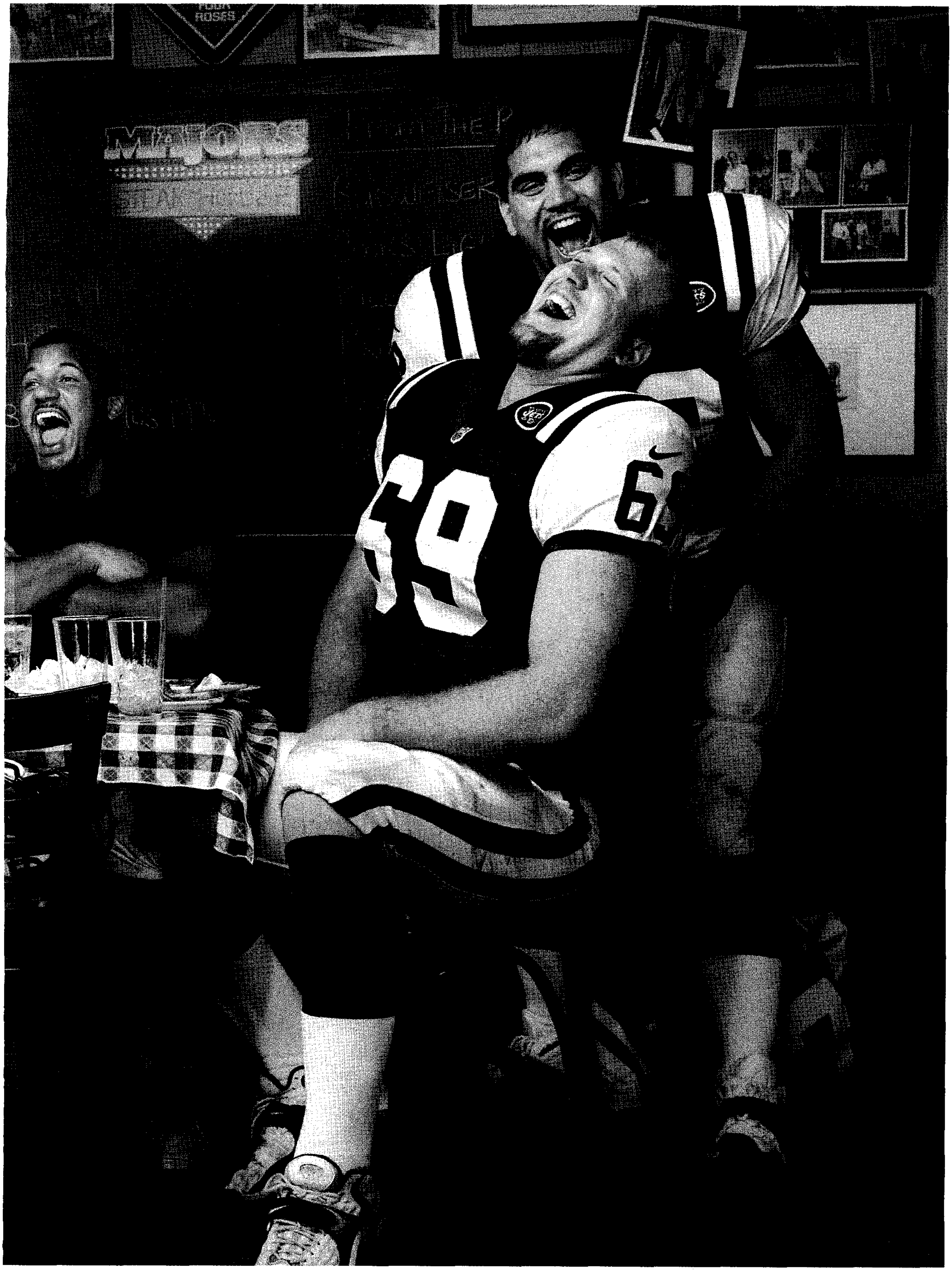
The pro wrestler Nicole Bass (with help from Flying by Foy) hefts the figure skater Jennifer Kirk and the jockey Jorge Chavez.



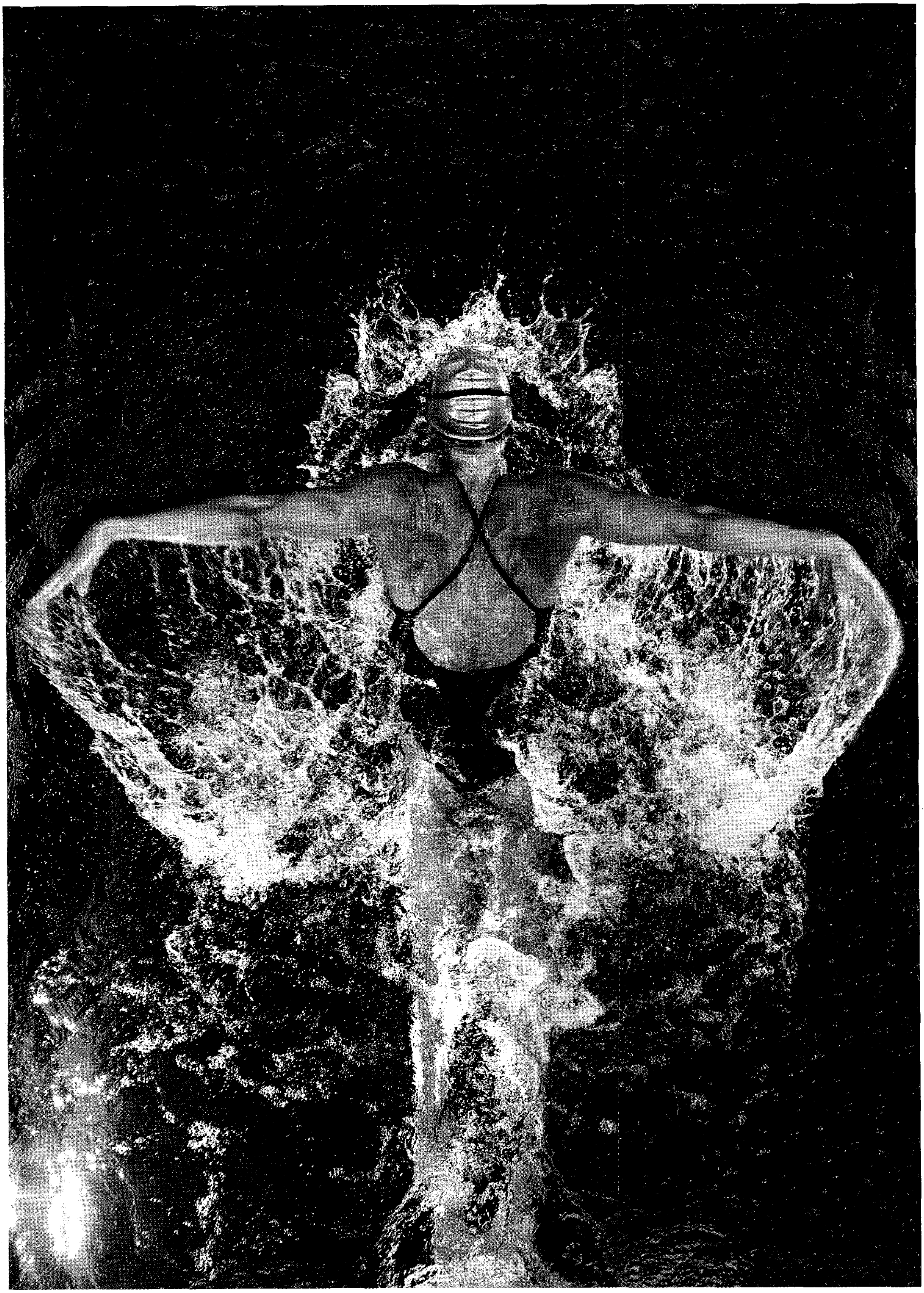
The New York Yankees' Derek Jeter, the first shortstop since Ernie Banks to lead his team in hits in each of his first four seasons.



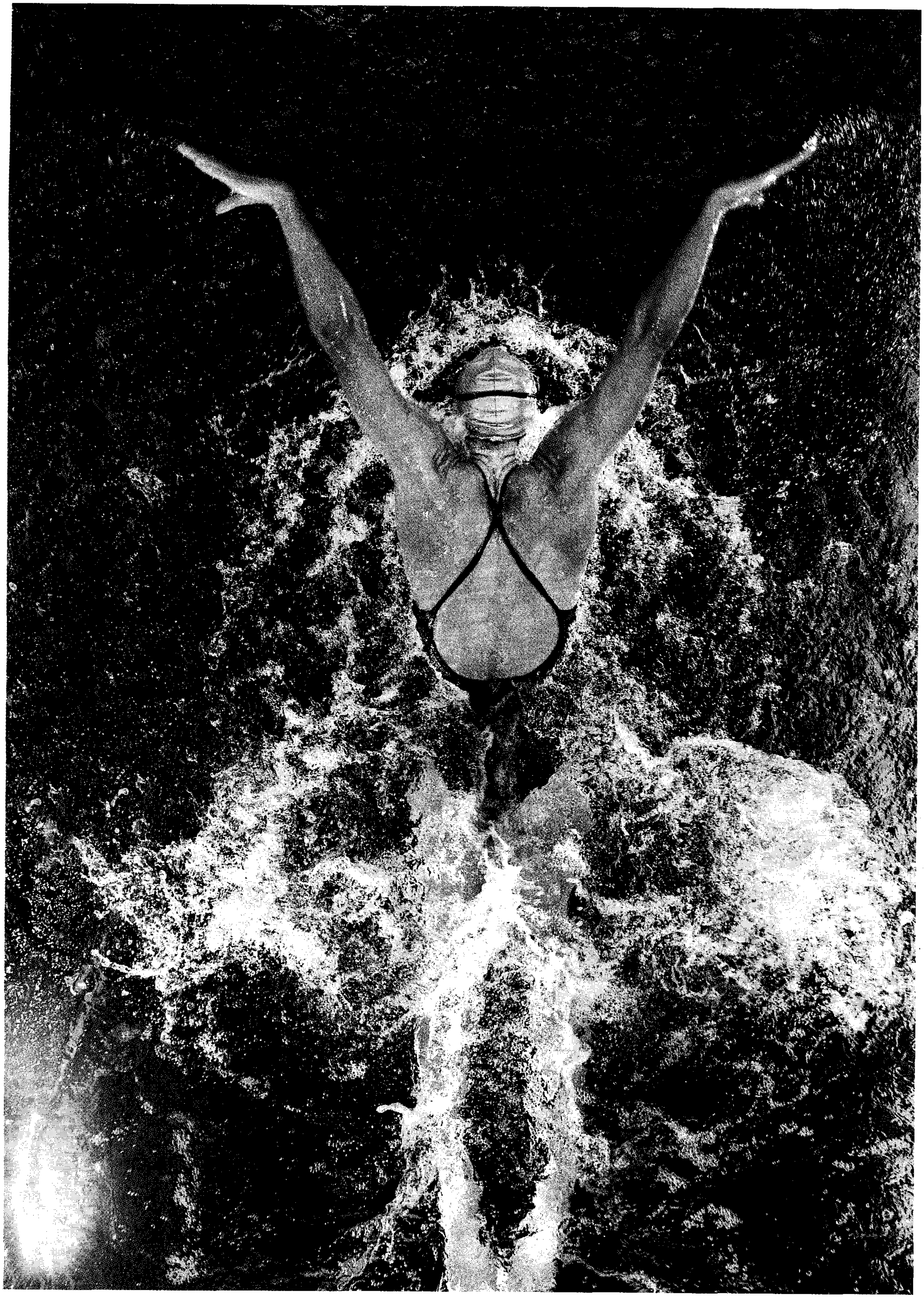
Starters for the New York Jets offensive line, at a Long Island steakhouse, near the team's training camp: right tackle Ryan Young (and



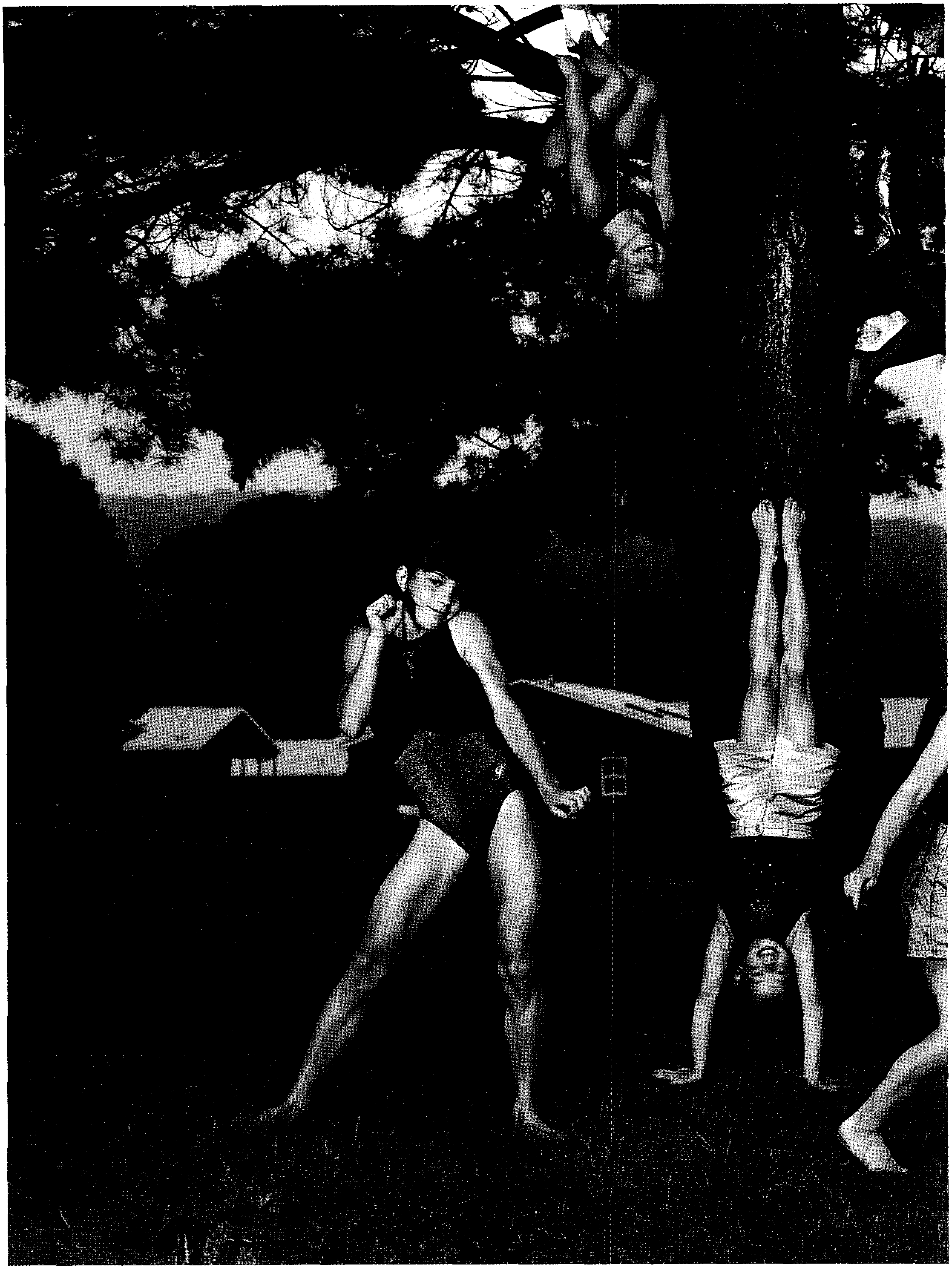
waiter Nick Gianakos), left guard Kerry Jenkins, right guard Randy Thomas, center Kevin Mawae (standing), and left tackle Jason Fabini.



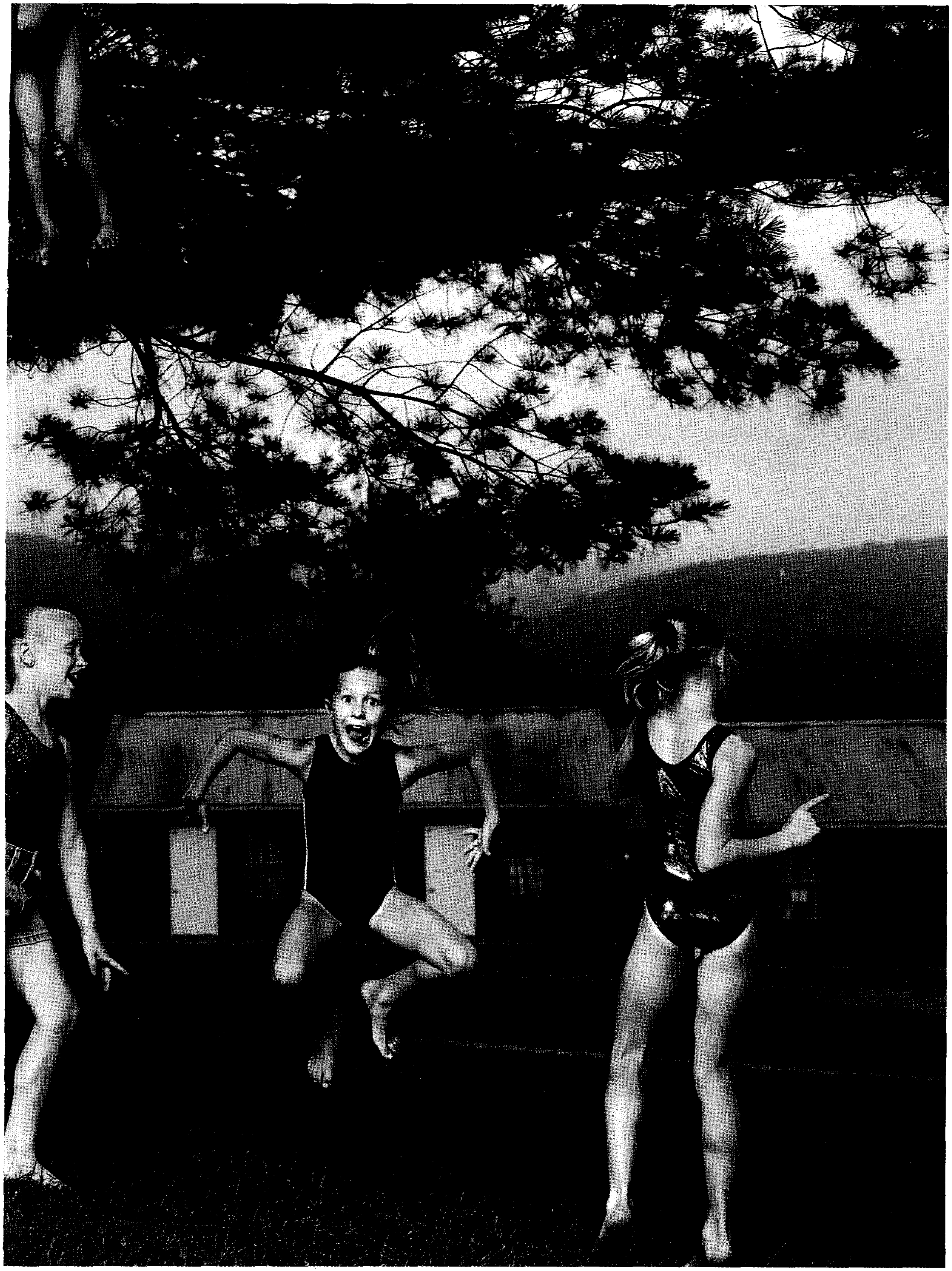
Jenny Thompson practices the butterfly, one of two strokes (freestyle is the other) in which she stands to qualify for the Olympics.



Thompson is competing in four individual events at the United States trials in Indianapolis.

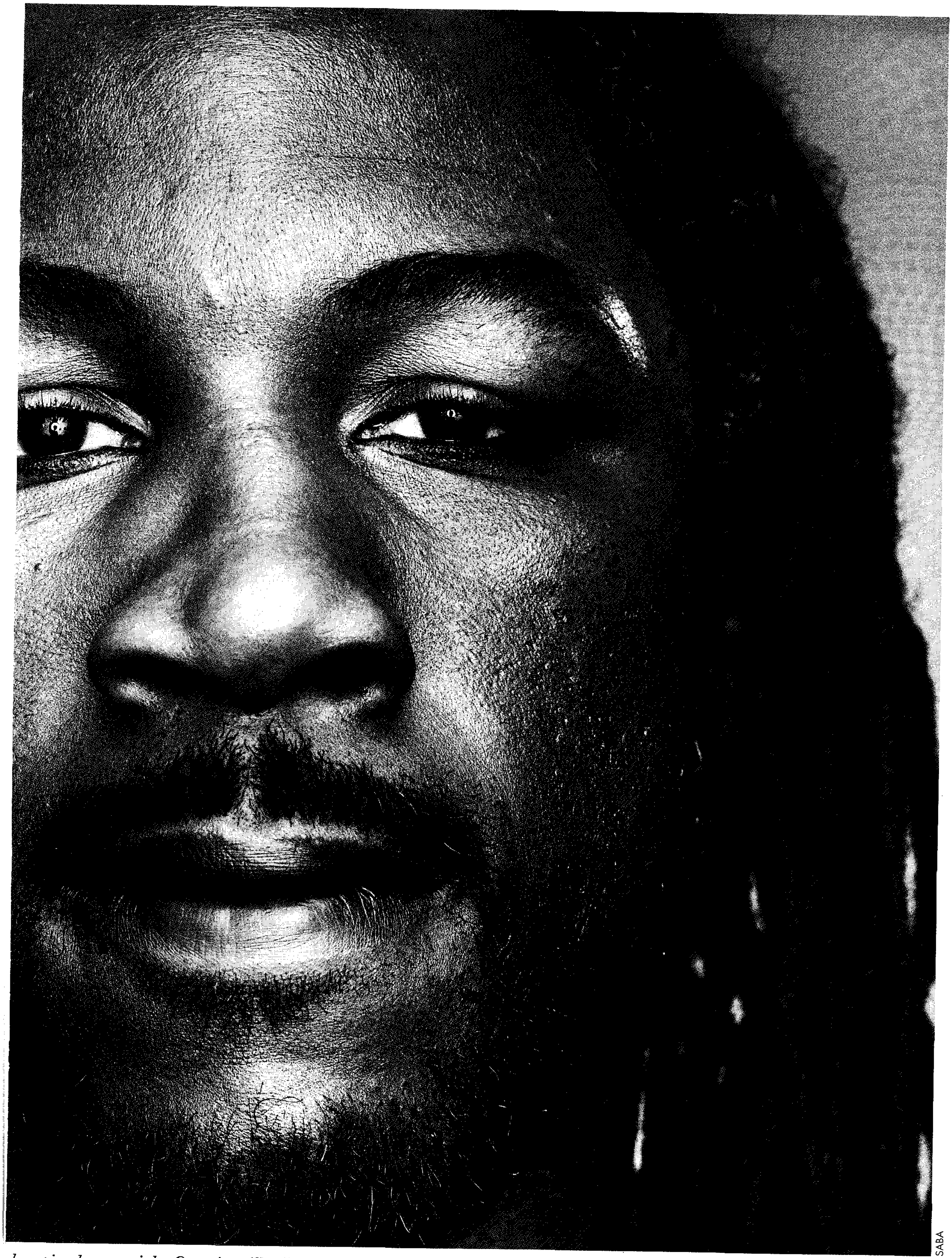


Eight young gymnasts, ages six to ten, at the Woodward Gymnastics Camp, in Woodward, Pennsylvania, where aspirants train under

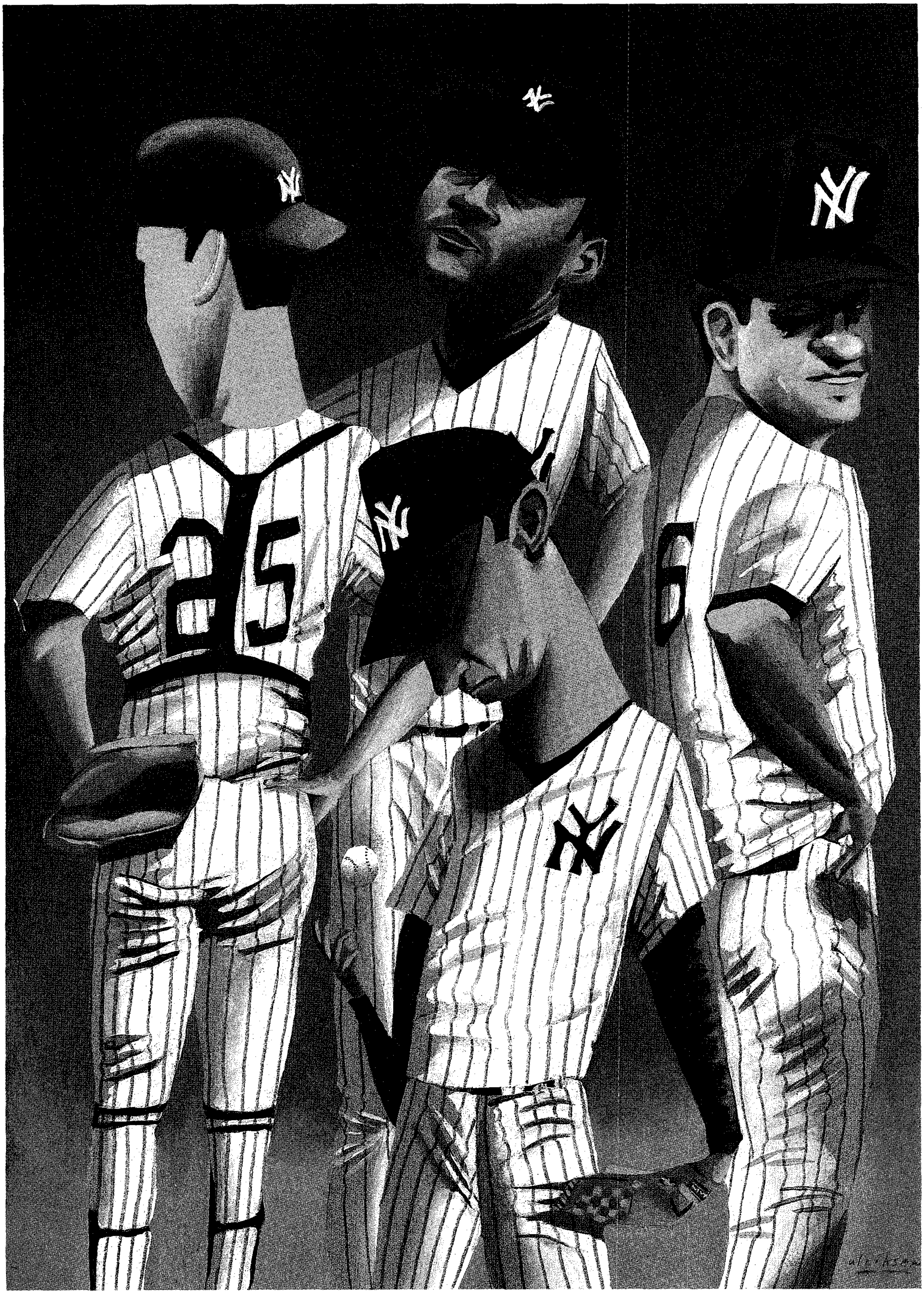


the tutelage of such tested Olympic athletes as Svetlana Boguinskaia and Amanda Borden.

The British boxer Lennox Lewis, the worl


SABA

champion heavyweight. Opposite: Allen Johnson, who currently holds the world's highest ranking in the hundred-and-ten-metre hurdles.



David Cone and his crestfallen Yankee compadres (along with Manager Joe Torre) keep looking for that slider.

THE SPORTING SCENE

TALES OF THE BRONX

The Yankee story this time isn't all about winning.

BY ROGER ANGELL

Just when we fans had stopped being sentimental about baseball, along comes a season stuffed with more moral candy than "Field of Dreams." This is a Bronxian view of the universe, and perhaps suspect, but following the drudgy yet persevering millennial World Champion Yankees, as I have been doing this time around, has been like going on a Talmudic retreat or haying with the Mennonites. Up at the Stadium, I learned to curb my irritability over a gloomy and inferior early version of the grand champions (Philip Barry's "With the rich and mighty, always a little patience" leaps to mind); to relish modesty (until recently, these Yankees had turned their backs on the ugly rush of home runs that has disfigured the sport in other quarters); and to appreciate the wise distribution of hard-earned capital (the acquisition by the Yankee management of blue-chip replacement stars, good fellows all, to bolster a lineup hard-pressed by age and injury). Fans at the Stadium have also been offered lively seminars on the laws of chance (an unassisted triple play, and, almost better, a wild throw by second baseman Chuck Knoblauch that conked the mother of a famous broadcaster, Fox Sports' Keith Olbermann, in the stands behind first base); and cogitations on the nature of evil (who knows what lurks in the heart of the Rocket?). Knoblauch's mysterious throwing problems, to be sure, are beyond metaphor, a kind of suffering almost too painful to watch at times, and are matched only by the troubles endured by the Yankees' bravura right-hander, David Cone, who has lost his form and his ferocious habit of winning. After a 2–10 record and four torturous months—or so he sees it—he has been too highly thought of to be sidelined, and too proud and combative not to expect a reversal.

MARK ULRIKSEN

Yankeeball has been lively, despite the lessons. Cone, facing the Red Sox' cue-stick-thin Ramon Martínez at the Stadium on Friday night of the Memorial Day weekend, appeared to slip out of trouble in the top of the first inning when he speared Brian Daubach's hard comebacker on the mound, with one out and runners at first and third. With an inning-ending double play at hand, his attention was caught by the glimpsed front base runner, Jeff Frye, darting plateward, and he unaccountably instituted a rundown and tag-out. One out instead of two—blame it on nerves, blame it on David's 1–3 record to date and a mad resolution not to give up any more runs, ever. Carl Everett's quickly ensuing bloop single, hit off an excellent pitch, delivered two runs, and felt like a deserved punishment. "Good players anticipate situations and make the right play," Cone said later. "I blew it." This was balanced and Conean, in the postgame standup interview, but his message when he got back to the dugout at the end of the inning had been plainer: "I should have my fucking salary taken away."

The next morning, in the clubhouse, Manager Joe Torre slipped a consoling Havana cigar—a Cohiba—into Cone's hand and murmured, "You looked exactly like Bob Gibson out there. I can still hear him: 'Forget the double play—that runner's never going to get home!' "

Another jolt was just ahead in that game—a brusque two-run homer into the left-field stands by Cone's old batterymate Mike Stanley in the third. David pitched better after that, at one point knocking off ten outs in a row, but the early Boston runs stood up: another "L" in the scorecard, which sank him to 1–4. I would have felt worse except for a distraction back in the third inning, when a fan fell out of the upper deck and onto the high foul screen behind home. Up close, where I was, it shook you up—a horizontal figure passing through our press-box field of vision, top to bottom, a bare twenty feet away, with an accompanying, instantly exhaled journalistic "WHOAWW!" The view from the suddenly crowded front row disclosed the fallen aviator prone, off on the right side of the sloping wire-mesh screen, with his cigarettes and wallet arrayed at his side. He was alive but semiconscious within his own dent, weirdly framed by a circle of empty blue seats directly below, where the fans had belatedly scattered. The victim looked all right at first but then passed out. He was breathing bumpily, and his outspread arms, angled head, and motionless form took on the suggestion of a crucifixion. Joe Torre, emerging from the dugout, said a word to home-plate ump John Shulock, who called off play at last, and the players, bystanders now, stood staring in a deepening well of silence. No help seemed at hand, and the thought came to me—and to others, I'm sure—that this man, weirdly and beautifully suspended in the air behind home, was about to die.

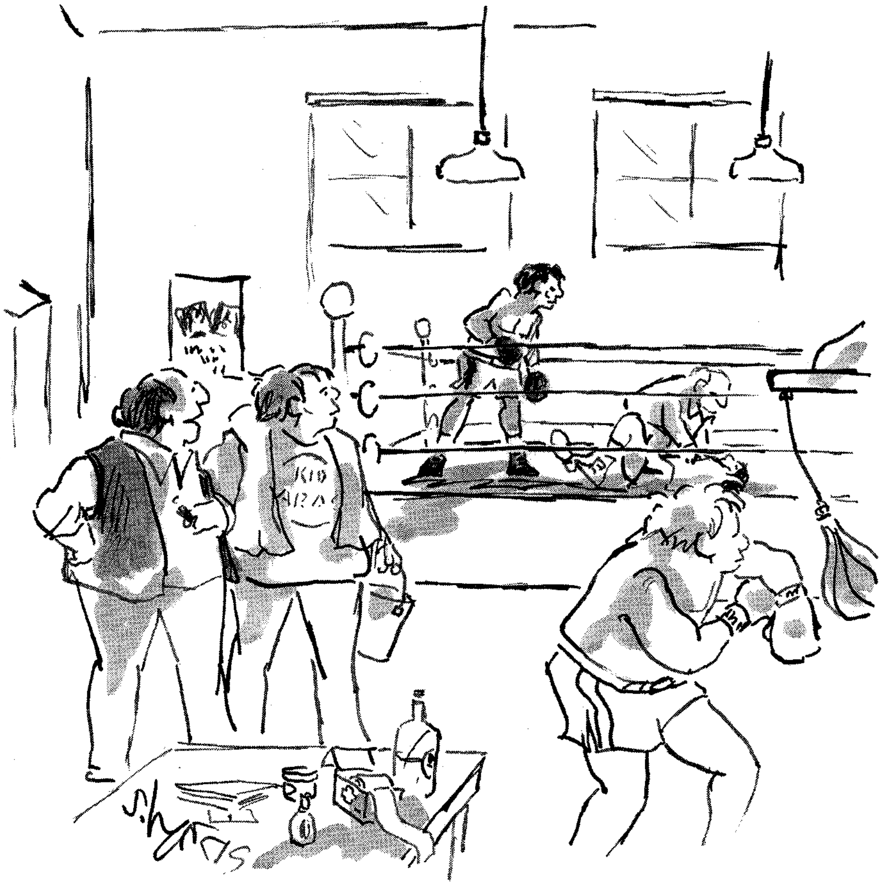
He stirred instead, opened his eyes and took an addled look about, and then, amazingly, sat up, his arms pointing upward in a vapid and infuriating "We're No. 1" gesture. He pumped again, eliciting roars, and we turned away in disgust. You're not dying, dude—you're drunk. Changing our minds, we wanted him dead. He crawled at last to the mezzanine row at the top of the screen and disappeared into oblivion. We went back to the game and the gags, with the best coming from the *Post* columnist Joel Sherman, who said, "I thought it was Cashman"—the Yankee general manager, fired at last and flung into the void by the Boss.

Vividness prevailed during this run of late-spring games, and Pedro vs. the Rocket, two nights later, was pure. Ever since his arrival with the Yankees, last year, Clemens had been giving enervating attention to the corners of the plate, as if his work in New York would require a more cosmopolitan array of stuff, but tonight he was free of that. All his pitches were on order—the upper-story, four-seam fastball, the devouring splitter, and the rest—and there was a gleam of excitement in his eyes as he twiddled with his cap brim between pitches, staring over his chest at each new batter, as of yore. Pedro's horse-wide eyes give him an expression of supernal attention and intelligence as he looks in at his catcher, and the economy of each delivery, when taken with the startling motions of the ball, appears to complete an idea, a plan confirmed and flashed into view. This was Clemens the five-time Cy Young holder, who had twice struck out twenty batters in a game, a decade apart, paired up against the Pedro whose seventeen-K effort against the Yanks in his last start here was called the best game ever pitched at the Stadium.

This one lacked only September. With nothing to choose between the two starters for eight innings, we could only sit back and wish it weren't rushing by so quickly. Martínez threw a curveball to O'Neill in the fourth that took a dive under his fists, and struck him out in the sixth with a change of pace—it was a knuckle curve—that went past like a sigh. Clemens, more emotional, shouted something (it turned out to be "That's a strike!") at the Sox right fielder Trot Nixon when he struck him out, looking, in the first. After six innings, he had faced the minimum eighteen batters, ten of them strikeouts; the two lone base runners, aboard with singles, were wiped away on a pickoff and an unstolen base.

The break, the awaited oddity, came in the top of the ninth, when Roger couldn't find Frye's little one-bouncer, behind him on the mound. Nixon, back again, smashed the fourth pitch deep into the right-center-field bleachers, silencing the argument. The Yankees loaded the bases in the ninth, but that was all. Yes—well, O.K., then. A comeback would have smudged the memory of these two pitchers on a great night, which was all we wanted in the end.

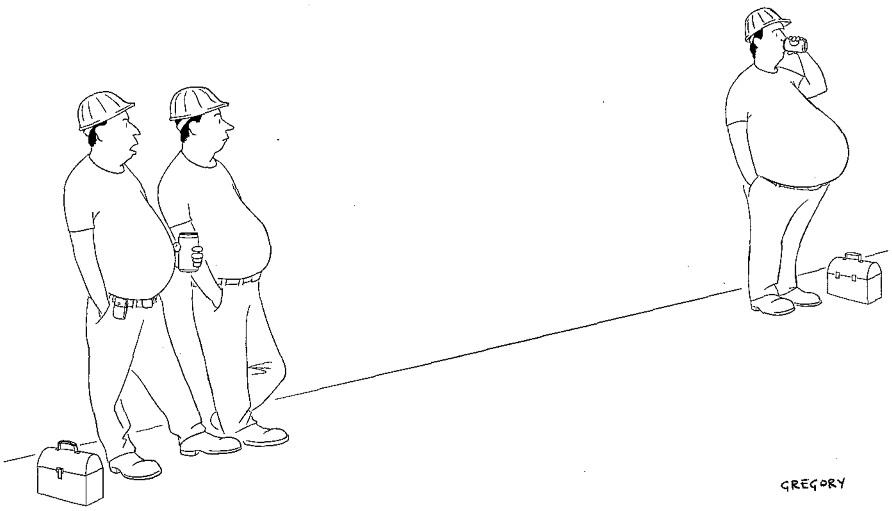
The Monday holiday celebration, against the brash, attractive Oakland Athletics, suffered by comparison, and starter Andy Pettitte may have briefly reflected that his 4–1 win might have been the only two-hitter in Yankee history that felt like an anticlimax. History, in any case, arrived in the sixth inning, but so quietly that its observers or acolytes—the Yanks and A's in the field and we in the stands—could manage no more than a murmured "Wha'?" when a low batted ball to Oakland second baseman Randy Velarde became three outs before our eyes. The situation had been routine—no outs, Tino Martinez on second base and Jorge Posada on first, after an infield error. When the pitcher, Omar Olivares, allowed the count on the next batter, Shane Spencer, to reach three and two, both runners took off with the next pitch, as expected. The ball, a peaceable liner, was gloved by Velarde at shoulder height, and he tagged Posada, in front of him on the base path, and unhurriedly continued to second base, in plenty of time to step on the bag and double off—no, triple off—the returning Tino. Nothing to it.



"He looks very promising—but let's see how he does on the written test."

The play required so little skill and hustle that one's first impulse was to think it mundane—something that the game must crank out every week or so in its endless rounds of circumstance. But this was only the eleventh unassisted triple play in the history of the game, and the first in any New York ballpark. I had not imagined such a thing, and could claim memory of only two prior assisted, unfabulous triple plays in all my years at the game. The next morning, I remembered to look in the box score, and there it was: "TP—Oakland 1 (Velarde)." An accompanying item listed the ten previous players who'd pulled off the chance—baseball is the only sport that keeps this word in its lexicon—going back to 1909, and including Bill Wambsganss, who did it in the World Series of 1920. Most of them were shortstops or second basemen, of course, but on May 31, 1927, Johnny Neun, a first baseman with the Tigers, grabbed a line drive struck by an Indians batter, tagged the next man on the base path, and, glimpsing glory, ran all the way over to second to beat the other base runner to the bag. There had been an unassisted triple play pulled off by the Chicago Cubs in Pittsburgh on the afternoon before Neun's; the next one arrived forty-one years later.

A thunderation of offense has not been the Yankees' style this season or last, but the rumblings elsewhere are unsettling. Judging by midterm figures, there will be six thousand two hundred



"Gotta be an implant."

and twenty home runs wafted this year, or 2.56 per game, which is close to one extra downtowner per game than went out a decade ago. A hundred and seventy-six grand slams are projected, and fifty-eight batters will finish within the once élite thirty-homer circle. The modern game is all bangs and effects: it's summer-movie fare, awesome and forgettable—and extremely popular with the ticket-buyers. Clubhouse and press-box speculations about this firestorm are apprehensive, since it's agreed that the shape and tone of the sport are being knocked askew. Explanations variously lean toward the smaller new ballparks; the inexperienced and feebly talented pitchers who have lately found their way into the majors, thanks to expansion; the muscled-up dimensions of the hitters; the smaller, lower strike zone; and this year's sleek new Bud Selig Major League ball. Because the leagues are being phased out, in an administrative streamlining, this is the first official pill not to bear a separate American League or National League imprimatur, along with the swirled signature of the league's semi-anonymous president. But it's the feel of it that startles you—it's almost billiard-ball hard, with a smoother, slightly unpleasant slipperiness under one's fingers. It's whiter than the recent and not-so-recent balls I have at home, and the garish red stitches, which since childhood have reminded me of Dr. Frankenstein's handiwork, are flattened now, like the seam on a model's torso after repairs in a chic Vegas clinic. Whitey Ford, proffered one of the new balls at an autograph session before this year's Cooperstown inductions, stared in surprise, and said, "I can't believe how low the seams are. . . . I could never throw my curve the way I did fifty years ago, with these balls."

The pitchers, I noticed, share my querulousness about the Bud sphere and its consequences, but, being proud men, decline to blame it for their own shortcomings. David Cone, sitting in front of his locker one evening, jiggled a ball in his hand in an affronted way. "There doesn't seem to be any quality control," he said. "You can feel the difference from ball to ball—only two or three out of eight that come your way have the same weight and size. Some of them are sort of lopsided."

But when I asked if he thought the ball was juiced, or whether its slick new hide might account for his recent struggles in throwing his slider, he recoiled: "No, no—don't let me get *that* into my head."

Days and nights with the Yankees this year didn't wipe out all memory of my old flames across town, the Mets, who often seemed to be having the better parties. The Bronx could offer nothing to match John Rocker Day, at Shea, when the Braves, once again on top of their division, came to town with their loose-mouthed bullpen blatherer, who, after a visit last fall, had said uncouth things about the clientele on the No. 7 Flushing Line. Welcomed back with inky tabloid notices—the *Post's* "NOW PLAYING . . . JOHNNY ROTTEN," for instance—and six hundred-odd strategically deployed police up and down and around Shea, Rocker sprinted in from the bullpen in the eighth inning of the opening game, retired his inning's worth of Mets, one, two, three—a strikeout and two grounders—and departed the fray with a cocky tilt to his jaw. "JERK SMIRKS AS BRAVES PREVAIL" was all the *Post* could manage in the next day's riposte, but the Mets had a better answer that evening: a ten-run rally in the bottom of the eighth, erasing the Braves' 8–1 lead, and culminating in Mike Piazza's line-drive, three-run homer, thrillingly whanged off the left-field back wall.

The cops were still there on Saturday afternoon, dutifully deployed, with their backs to the field, as they scoped out the sunlit, peaceable families for signs of mayhem, but an obliging patrolperson stationed near me—I was in a field-level loge, with friends—confessed, "If there wasn't seven hundred cops here last night turning their heads when Piazza hit that home run, they're out of their minds." This time, Piazza struck out on a wild pitch in the first, and made it safely to first while a Mets run came home on the play. Derek Bell, the Mets' delightful, baggy-eyed right fielder—he's a character out of "Tintin"—had a single and two doubles and a homer for the day, as he and his teammates touched up Greg Maddux for seven runs in the first two innings, and won by 9–1. Maddux was recovering from the flu, but what the hey.

I missed the first two-park, one-day doubleheader in New York—a morning-afternoon split, which came out 6–4 Giants, at the Brooklyn Superbas' Washington Park in the morning, and then 3–0 Superbas, at the Polo Grounds, later on. This happened on September 7, 1903—a day that cannot have surpassed Saturday, July 8, 2000, for interest and events and weather, or eclipsed this latter day-night, double-parked doubleheader, which came to pass when an earlier Mets-Yanks date at Yankee Stadium was rained out and could only be squeezed into the schedules in such fashion. Two games for the price of two! It was a double sellout, of course—109,986 fans, all told—and early on at Shea you could see the head and shoulders of every single back-row, top-deck patron plain against the blue sky and arrayed from one end of the stands around to the other. Scudding clouds threw shadows across the grass and when they went away again the Mets outfielders, in their home whites, glowed in the sunlight like angels. The noise was continuous, with the tension of play appearing to mute the expected taunts. By luck, both sets of fans could cheer for Doc Gooden, lately plucked from oblivion by the Yankees and given his first start here at Shea, of all places—it was his first time back since 1994—and he delighted himself with a strong, edgy effort, good for a 4–2 win. Starring in a feature role, one could say, was Yankee first-base coach Lee Mazzilli, who had stalked indignantly onto the field in the first inning crying "Obstruction!" after near-contact on the base path between Chuck Knoblauch and Mets first baseman Todd Zeile. The first-base umpire, a rookie named Robb Cook, bought the package.

The Yanks prevailed again uptown (and by the same score) in the nightcap, but the joy of the special day was lost when Mike Piazza, batting against Clemens in the second inning, took a fastball to the head that put him down, dazed and blinking, in the dirt of the batter's box. The Mets' star, a strong candidate for this year's Most Valuable Player award in his league, had feasted off Clemens in the past, most recently with a grand slam at the Stadium in June, during a humiliating 12–2 rout. Piazza leans comfortably out over the middle of the plate when batting—he moves in furniture, bedding, and lamps—and an admonitory message by Roger was not unexpected. Clemens, moreover, had been under pressure from Joe Torre and his coaches to rely more on his inside heat—to build everything around that early discourager, the way he had once done—and had fared much better as a result. A heater at Piazza's belt buckle here or even a fiery brushback at shoulder level would have induced no more than glares, but this was terrifying. Piazza, cringing, threw up his hands in front of his face as the ball took him almost on the forehead, striking the "NY" on his helmet just above the angle of the brim. Clemens walked in a few steps after the event, staring at the trainers and players gathered around the fallen Piazza, but came no closer. Gestures and angry cries came from the visiting-team dugout—the Mets in their clubhouse after the game were still incensed—and the ritual retaliation, when Mets starter Glendon Rusch drilled Tino Martinez in the rear end in the bottom of the inning, felt inadequate to the deed. At the press gathering, Bobby Valentine, his face gnarled with unhappiness, said that what Clemens had done was part of a pattern with him, and that it was terrible.

I don't know. The Rocket has pretty good control, but an intention pitch is not an intention to kill. Clemens was disliked by the Yankees when he was pitching for the Red Sox and the Blue Jays—he hit Derek Jeter in the ribs one day at a spring-training game in 1998—and now he is disliked or worse by the team across town. I recall a time when knockdowns were a commonplace, and some pitchers—Bob Gibson and Don Drysdale among them—built great careers with repertoires that included fear. I don't believe that Clemens intended injury or even expected to discourage a hitter like Piazza. What he hoped for at best was a fractional hesitation in the next swing. The word that came to my mind, later on this long day, was "bow tie": a phrase that Nolan Ryan sometimes used to describe an up-pitch—up by the neck. It was such a trademark that whenever it comes up in conversation, to this day, you hear it repeated in Ryan's own East Texas accents—a "boww taih." Everyone says it this way, and then everyone laughs.

The Yankees, early shoppers at the July trading bazaar that separates post-season aspirants from the bystander clubs, helped themselves with the addition of Denny Neagle, an experienced left-handed starter acquired from the Reds, and infielder Jose Vizcaino, who has allowed Knoblauch to play some games as a designated hitter, on furlough from his throwing anxieties at second. David Justice, meantime, batted .369, with six homers, in his first month aboard, while the Yankees went 18–9, restoring a little class to the Wal-Mart of the American League East. Last week, Justice had a hand in the most electrifying moment of the summer. With the Yankees trailing the Oakland Athletics by 3–2 in the bottom of the ninth, Bernie Williams stood in against A's stopper Jason Isringhausen and rapped his first pitch into the right-field stands. Justice, the next batter, swung at Isringhausen's next offering, a low fastball, and sailed it into the right-center-field bleachers. Game over.

The Neagle trade had caused a buzz, since accomplished left-handed starters are coveted like black pearls in today's market, and the Yankees appear to have closed the deal moments after the auction flag went up in Cincinnati. Neagle, a control artist with a mature range of speeds, has a fondness for off-the-field pranks that would crack up a ten-year-old. These Yankees, who miss the laid-back Chili Davis and the engaging Tim Raines as teammates, had badly wanted a bit of sunshine, and I just hope I'm in the clubhouse the first time Neagle does his Amtrak train-whistle effect from close behind Paul O'Neill.

The Yankees' payroll, with the new additions (including the nine hundred thousand dollars they will be paying to Jose Canseco, who was unexpectedly acquired after the trading deadline, via the garage-sale waivers route), comes to about a hundred and ten million dollars, the most in the majors, but I will take a pass this time on the old tilted-playing-field, unfairness-of-it-all bleatings, and point out instead that, despite that midseason rush of added-on muscular itinerants, preservation remains the central theme in the Bronx. Bernie Williams, Paul O'Neill, Derek Jeter, Mariano Rivera, Andy Pettitte, and David Cone have been together on the Yankees since 1995, and, along with Manager Torre, who arrived in 1996, have set that uniquely preoccupied, senior-executive tone that has characterized their inexorable five trips to the post-season and three World Championships. And what other leading or contending team, one could ask, would have stood stead-

THE SPORTING LIFE

Trophy hunting.

A while back, my mother allowed that the trophy collection gathered on the shelves behind the bar in our den when I was growing up represented a lapse in interior-decorating judgment. These mementos of scrambles and best-ball and handicap tournaments at the Meadowbrook Country Club, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, were evidence that my father had an excellent short game and that Mom could smack the ball pretty well. One summer, Dad and his pals Edgar and Murray organized their own tournament, which they named the Marigold Invitational (after their wives—Marjorie, Isabel, and Goldie). Dad's Marigold Invitational trophy was engraved "Longest Putts," and Mom's said "Lowest Hole." We were that kind of family, I'm afraid.

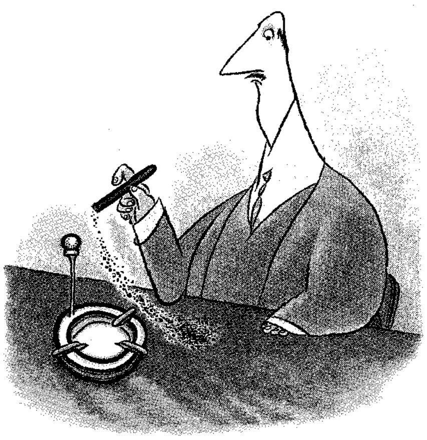
The problem, as I saw it, was that none of the trophies were mine. This was, mind you, in the days before children's competitive sports got hijacked by self-esteem mongers. Somehow, Woody Allen's dictum that "eighty per cent of success is showing up" has been twisted into the proposition that any kid willing to stick it out through a season of soccer or Little League baseball is entitled to a "participation" trophy. My own sons have dozens.

In the summer of 1962, I also had a shot at a place on the shelves behind the bar. Here was the situation:

I'm not quite twelve years old, not yet five feet tall, and competing in a nine-hole first-round B-flight match in the peewee division of the Oklahoma State Junior Golf Tournament, in the metropolis of Bartlesville. My goal isn't to win—I know better than that—but the prospect of, say, a consolation bracket trophy percolates in my imagination.

On the first hole, a par four, my opponent, Jackie, gives himself away. It's taken me a nice drive followed by three unsightly hacks to reach the green, and I'm still thirty feet from the cup. (Almost forty years later, such hair-tearing inconsistency remains within my capacity.) Meanwhile, Jackie has gotten on in three and canned a twelve-footer before I can further embarrass myself by three-putting.

"You playin' on grass greens for the first time, too?" Jackie asks as we hike to the second tee. He'd told me where he was from—an oil town that I knew only from the weather reports, one of those outposts where, from May through September, the temperature broke into the nineties right after breakfast, a dispiriting routine punctuated by the occasional tornado. It's so hot and so dry, Jackie explains—just before he places his second drive dead center about two hundred yards out—that what passes for a putting surface on his home course is a target where the fairway has been scraped to the hardpan and smoothed with a grader, coated with road oil, planted with a flagstick, and left to bake. Uh-huh, Bubba, I tell myself, and I'm Julius Boros.



ARNOLD ROTH

Actually, Jackie might not have been lying about the non-green greens. But he was unmistakably a trophy hunter—a hustler who purposely dogged it in the qualifying round so that he could go to town against the likes of me during match play and be guaranteed to win a piece of shiny brass hardware. He closed me out on the sixth hole. Later that week, back home empty-handed, I read in the agate type of the Tulsa *World* that he'd won the division. Why did I care? Because when you're eleven years old that sort of thing tends to matter. We were well into the Johnson Presidency before I collected a trophy of my own—for enduring nine years of Hebrew school. Let's just say that I've experienced deeper satisfactions.

The same summer I lost to Jackie, I was fishing one afternoon from the bridge over the water hazard on the eighth hole at Meadowbrook, using some kosher salami I'd sealed in a jar and left out in the sun until it was good and stinky—excellent catfish bait. Dad came along with his usual Saturday foursome and stroked a Titleist golf ball perfectly with a 7 iron. It flew a hundred and thirty yards, kissed the front apron of the lush-green green, took three hops, and rolled into the cup, the only hole in one I've ever witnessed. I dropped my fishing rod, raced across the tee, and leaped into his arms. He mailed the ball to the Titleist people, and they sent it back dated and mounted on an ashtray.

Why an ashtray? I don't know, but my father smoked for forty regrettable years, the price of which was emphysema, one small consequence of which is that it's been a long time since he's swung a golf club. The other day, I asked him what had happened to his old trophies, and, except for the ashtray, which sits on a desk in his office, where he never goes anymore, he had no idea. That hole in one, though, is prominently displayed in our shared memory bank—ineradicable, sweet, gleaming, the genuine just-right thing.

—*Mark Singer*

"Hey, kids! Grandpa's on TV."

• •

fast behind the iconic David Cone while he has struggled to right himself through a nightmarish twenty-one starts, compiling an unexpected and painful 2–10 won-and-lost record, with a 6.56 earned-run average?

Cone, only a year removed from his perfect game against the Montreal Expos, last July—no hits, no runs, no one on base, and only the sixteenth such feat in the books—came into this season with the fourth-best earned-run average (well, tied for fourth) among all pitchers in the nineties, and with four World Series rings, a Cy Young Award, and two twenty-game seasons on his résumé. He had struggled after the Montreal perfecto, winning just two more games in the regular going, but he pitched seven strong innings in a winning effort against the ambitious Red Sox in the American League Championships, and then shut out the Braves in the World Series, giving up a lone double in another seven-inning stint while the Yanks cruised to another World Championship. He was thirty-seven now—an older pitcher, but one with a unique ability to adapt his repertoire to the batters at hand and to whatever he found in his arm and head on a given day. He had run into some physical problems in recent years, undergoing an operation for an aneurysm in his right shoulder (a condition more common to kayakers than to pitchers) in 1996, and an arthroscopic shoulder clean-out the next year, but he responded with a 20–7 season during the Yankees' overwhelming 1998 campaign. After some negotiations last winter—Cone wanted two seasons, not one—he signed on for another year, at twelve million dollars.

What has made Cone's recent difficulties so hard to watch is not just the numbed or astounded or simply resigned look he has shown at different times while on the mound—his bent, weighted-down body language has become a frieze of despair—but the disappearance of so many refreshing Conean traits and patterns that we once took for granted. In mid-game, pausing infinitesimally while his body dropped suddenly lower on the mound in mid-pitch, he exuded a barely repressed hostility for the man up at the plate that did not conceal his excitement over what he himself was doing out there. Always emotional, he gave the illusion that you could see his thinking, as well as his skill and strength, and this, in turn, brought him closer to the fans—or to *this* fan, at least—who almost believed they could do this lovely stuff, too, if only. He shared the work with you.

The full flotilla of Cone pitches—fastball, slider, curveball, and sinker (the split-finger pitch)—came freighted with ideas as well as angles and heat, bearing connection not only to the prior pitch but to what this same batter had seen from Cone two innings ago or last month or last year. The slider turned up in two variations: an inside, early-count pitch that bent toward the plate just as it appeared headed for the hip or haunch of a right-handed batter, and was usually taken for a called strike; and the wide-breaking variation, delivered mostly sidearm, that swerved off, Frisbee-like, to the outside, where it was swung at and fouled off or, more likely, missed. Cone's admired "back-door" slider was nothing more or less than the first pitch above, thrown to a left-handed batter. Tim McCarver, who likes to get things right, once musingly said to me, "You know, the outside of the strike zone can't be the back door, can it? Couldn't we call that the patio slider?" Inside or out, swung at or taken, the Cone slider has won enough certifications to merit presentation to the New York Landmarks Commission. Joe Girardi, David's departed day-to-day receiver, used to claim that the pitch paused in midair, like a driver at a red light, and then hung a left, while Ralph Kiner, the hoary Mets broadcaster and Hall of Fame Pirates slugger, said that the Cone slider reminded him of Sal Maglie's old scimitar, back at the Polo Grounds a half century ago.

Cone's face always lighted up when he talked about his work. "I think it's the definitive position," he said to me this spring. "Nothing is more exciting than looking for a new pitch or a new grip. I like to think of the world's greatest athlete coming up to bat against me—Tiger Woods, Wayne Gretzky, I don't care who it is—and I'm looking in at him and thinking, *You have no chance.* I never forget that old saying that pitchers aren't athletes. I mean, right—I'm not an athlete, I'm a *pitcher!*"

Warming up before his first game of the season, in Anaheim, Cone was seized with optimism. He had conducted his spring preparations at his own pace, rounding slowly into form, and he was throwing here without a trace of the chronic arm pain that had dogged him in recent years. While in Florida, he had gone back to a Tampa acupuncturist he had consulted often the year before, in an effort to free himself from the cortisone shots he had had to endure in stressful times. (I accompanied him to one session this year, and saw his twelve-million-dollar arm porcupined with a dozen-odd needles, and treated with glass suction cups that brought up drops of blood from underlying bruises.) Everything had worked, and he was in better shape now than he could remember. A great season was just ahead.

The truth came quickly. Cone's first batter of the year, Angels left fielder Darrin Erstad, hit a home run over the center-field fence, and then banged a two-run double in his next at-bat. David left the game with two outs in the third, down by five runs, and responsible in the end for eight. He pitched better in his next two games, against the Rangers at the Stadium and down in Texas, but was not involved in a decision. Against the Blue Jays in Toronto, toward the end of April, he was abysmal, coughing up eight runs in three innings (one was not earned) and three homers. Then he beat the same club, in a return engagement at Yankee Stadium, shutting them out with three hits over seven innings, and fanning five batters. He was back—or so it seemed.

Cone's earned-run average came down steadily over the next five starts, but his season was taking shape. Tied when he departed a game, or trailing by a run or two, and once even ahead by 2–1, he could not buy a win. He was not himself. Tinkering with fresh pitches and grips, he had lost that air of brisk hostility that once set him apart. He looked puzzled out there, sometimes hangdog. The trusty slider—the inside, called-strike version, in particular—had abandoned him, and now often arrived as a mild, rolling bender, up in the strike zone, from where it was often mashed for a double or a homer. Most frustrating for Cone was the continuing health of his arm—he had no traces of pain, even after a tough run of innings—and the excellent results he was getting during his off-day workouts with Mel Stottlemyre. Throwing in the bullpen on the second day after each start, the pitcher and the coach appeared to find strategies or explanations for everything that had gone wrong. Mysteriously losing his feel for a familiar pitch like the slider wasn't necessarily a matter of age, Mel said. He himself had lost his curveball when he was twenty-three—it just went away, and he'd had to come up with something else. Cone's workout pitches were strong and had a bite; these were the best side sessions of his life. What was going on? Waking up one night in his New York apartment, David went to the bathroom and found himself going through his pitching windup and delivery, naked in front of the mirror.

Facing the Athletics on the last day of May, hoping as ever for a reversal of fortune, Cone surrendered a three-run homer to Matt Stairs in the first, a run in the second, and then a homer and three more runs before his departure in the fourth. He had always remained for press interviews in the clubhouse, no matter how he had fared in a game—he is the most admired standup man in the business—but after the Oakland debacle he could not take the third round of beat writers and columnists, with their notebooks and tape recorders and looks of concern.

"I'll be back," he snapped. "I'm not

SOMEDAY, MY RON PERELMAN WILL COME.
MARISA ACOCELLA

done by a long shot. . . . I feel as if I have something left.” And he walked away.

Cone’s early difficulties appeared to elate some of my friends who are not baseball fans. They found it almost funny that a famous athlete with such a long record of success couldn’t win anymore or defend himself better. “It’s all over with him, isn’t it?” they said cheerfully. “He’s old. He looks terrible out there.” He was no longer beyond them, and they seemed relieved and released by this change. More recently, though, these same unfans have oddly changed their tone. While David’s sufferings have continued, they have begun to notice the man out there, rather than the sports celebrity. “I can hardly bear to watch anymore,” a television producer said the other day. “The guy is killing me.”

I understand this feeling, and, after another bad stretch, in late June and July, when David surrendered nine home runs in sixteen innings, I found myself running his games together in my mind, blurring their pain, even while he himself continued to see them separately and to look for gleams of hope in a little run of outs here, or a tough batter there, put away on a splitter in a perilous situation.

“This long, hard dry spell is beating me down,” he confessed to me once. “I’ve been overcreative at times. I experiment too much and lose my way—too much Young Tom Edison. Or else I get caught up in trying to throw the perfect pitch, which is an invitation to long innings and a whole lot of people on base.”

There were lapses of concentration, he admitted—a base runner allowed to steal at will, or a foolish little throwing error on an easy chance at first base. Other days, he was bitter about the bad luck that appears to dog a loser—a broken-bat wrong-field double that plates a run, and another that misses going foul by an inch or two. But then he mocked himself for his self-pity—“that ‘woe is me’ mode,” as he put it.

Another low blow was the rainout that did away with three dominating early innings and four strikeouts that he produced on a Sunday-night start against the Mets in June, but when I brought this up a week or two later he refused to find consolation there. “I lost that game,” he said strangely. “It went away.”

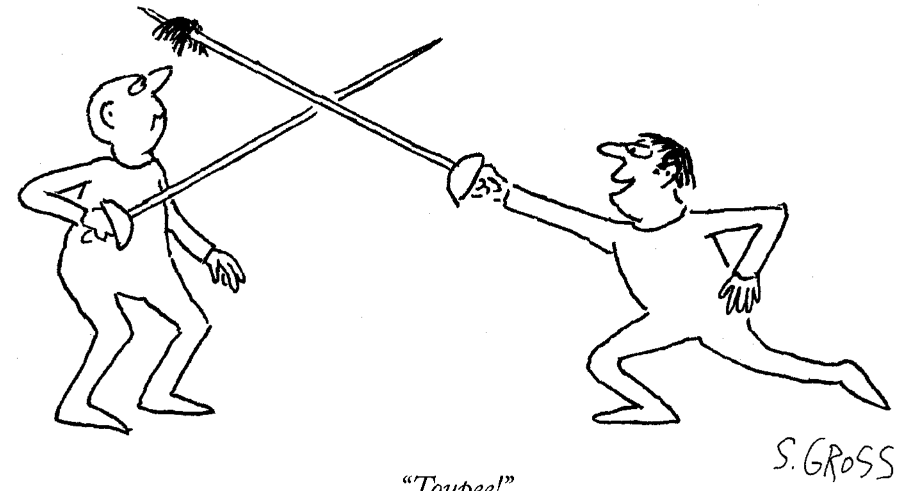
Joe Torre stood behind his old starter, finding enough in each failed outing to give him the ball still another time. “Every day is a big day with David now,” he said once. “The theatre of tomorrow can get to you. He’s fighting himself. He needs to concentrate less on his mechanics now and more on what we need from him in a given game.” Another day, expanding on Cone’s heart and his long record of success, Torre said, “David has enough in the bank for me to retire on.”

The mixed figure stuck with me, and brought back something the manager had said earlier, at the very beginning of the season, after I asked him why so many players and writers and fans seemed to care about this particular player. “He’s real,” Torre said, smiling, with his open-hands, “that’s easy” gesture.

Irony came aboard, clanking, when Cone’s old Mets teammate Doc Gooden joined the Yankee lineup in early July after a pitching reclamation program in Tampa. He’d been let go by the Astros and the Devil Rays, but, signed on and armed with an extra pitch, a knuckle curve, he made his début in one of the Yankees-Mets games at Shea Stadium, and then slipped into the Yankees’ rotation for a time. Cone was delighted for him, although he had badly wanted to pitch at Shea, too, even if he had to come in from the bullpen to do so. But there was no escape for him now. He was still pitching well enough, just barely, to deserve another start or two, but not with enough zing or luck to win. He was hurting the team, and he no longer felt comfortable in his old role as media spokesman for the Yankees. “You lose credibility when you struggle,” he said.

Losing in New York, in front of his old and loyal fans, had been a particular

“Innocence is no excuse.”



"Toupee!"

fear of his, and now it had turned into a nightmare. "You want to go out the right way," he said to me one day. "I've talked with Paulie [O'Neill] and David Wells about this. I told Boomer he'd done it exactly right—getting out of here on a good note. I haven't given up hope, but the important thing for me now is to show some dignity and grace in the face of bad pitching and a lot of people speculating."

Cone customarily runs up high counts in his games, with a hit batsman or a wild pitch or two tacked on along the way, but control is what he is all about—sometimes, I fear, at an exorbitant price. At that, it's been hard for me to decide whether the worst pressures to succeed have come from himself, or whether it isn't us fans, with our expectations and memories, who have forced him into such straits this summer.

Cone's most recent starts have been operatic in their emotions. Pitching against the Devil Rays in the fourth week of July, he gave up a solo first-inning home run to Greg Vaughn, but was still in the game in the sixth, tied at 2–2. He'd pitched well. With a man on second and two outs, he ran the count full to Jose Canseco and then threw a fastball that appeared to cut the bottom line of the strike zone. Home-plate ump Terry Craft failed to punch it up, however, allowing Canseco the base on balls, and Cone came down the mound shouting. The next batter, Steve Cox, stroked a single, putting the visitors ahead in the game—and for the day, it turned out. Cone finished the inning, but he was done for the day, after ninety-four pitches. A loser again—his record had gone to 1–9—he was red-faced and terse with the reporters afterward. He kept his hands oddly tucked behind his back, and a vein in the middle of his forehead was bulging. "Nothing encouraged me," he said. "I wasn't good enough."

Facing the Seattle Mariners, in front of a sellout Saturday crowd on August 5th, Cone threw six exhausting innings, repeatedly going to ball three or surrendering a base on balls after getting an early two-strike count on the hitter. He was two pitchers out there—the old Cone, in flashes, and then, in the same at-bat, a more anxious, flurried version of him, fighting for survival. He surrendered three runs, two of them on a homer to Alex Rodriguez—by no means an unknown fate for pitchers in this league—and left at last, down by 3–2, after a consuming hundred and thirty-seven pitches. He had just come north from a nine-day pitching brushup in Tampa, with the Yankees' mound guru Billy Connors, and while his motion was cleaner and shorter, the old destroying glare had not made the trip. And then—at last, at last—given another outing, and a rare outburst of supporting runs, Cone set down the Oakland Athletics over six eloquent innings, striking out eight and surrendering two runs, as the Yanks won by 12–6 and perhaps dismissed the long nightmare. Cone was himself, or close to it, flashing an excellent slider at times and one ninety-m.p.h. fastball. With two men aboard in the fifth, he struck out the side. Allowed at last to relax, he came down the dugout at the end of the sixth, with that "W" in his pocket, and with smiles and hugs and hand bumps showering him from every side.

Players understand winning, but it's more difficult for them to get a handle on the other stuff. Earlier this month, Bernie Williams told me that Cone had no idea how much the Yankees were pulling for him. "It's sad to watch," he went on. "David tries to be the same guy out there, but you can see that the situation's eating at him. Everyone in this game has to go through hard times in order to enjoy the good parts, but this is too hard for anybody."

The morning after the Devil Rays game, a quiet Sunday in the clubhouse, David had come in wearing a getaway-day shirt and tie—the team was going off that evening on a road trip to Baltimore and then Minnesota—and a different look. He seemed boyish, almost lighthearted. He beckoned me over to tell me something that had happened the night before. Almost certain that he'd not be allowed to go back out for the seventh inning, he had come into the clubhouse, where he set himself up in a comfortable chair in front of the television set in the manager's office. He lit a cigarette and cracked open a beer. He was cool, but when Mel Stottlemyre came in and told him that Joe had decided to go to the bullpen he lost it. "What difference does it make?" he screamed, and he picked up a ceramic ashtray and flung it across the room. "It was a big hand-painted thing," David said now, "and it hit that photograph of Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle on the wall next to the door there—you know—and smashed it all to pieces. Glass everywhere. It was bad—I apologized to Mel right away. He said he understood—he's always that way—but I'd shook him up. The clubhouse boys came in and began sweeping up the glass, so no one would find out. I'm going to have to apologize to Joe. I don't know what got into me."

But he didn't look apologetic, he looked free. "Listen," he said. "There's nothing wrong with my arm. I made a good pitch there." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

CORNERMAN

Teddy Atlas and the art of bruising.

BY DAVID REMNICK

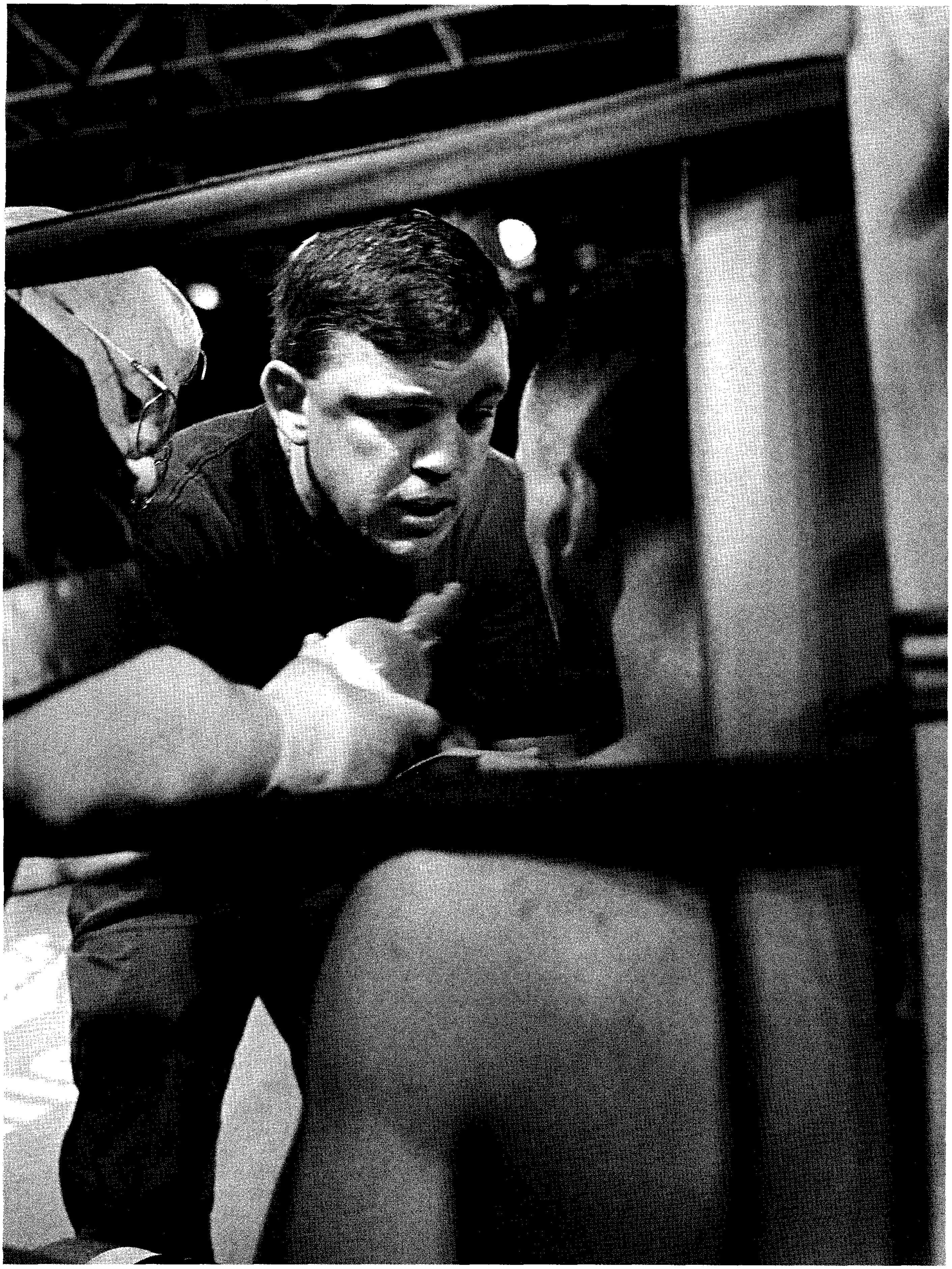
Most cornermen have no more to offer a fighter than a bucket to spit in. As they work over their charge—icing his welts, slaking his thirst—they frantically offer up whatever clichés come to mind. There are many. There is the cliché of persistence ("Keep at the jab!"); the cliché of heightened violence ("Bang the liver!"); the cliché of urgent avoidance ("Get off the ropes!"); and, not infrequently, when all else fails, the clichéd assurances of holy accompaniment ("Jesus loves you!"). From the corner toffs of the Regency period to the mobbed-up boyos of the forties and fifties, the trainer is a background figure, the unheeded Polonius. He knows that his pleas and instructions most often go unheard. Fighters, after all, are not modern quarterbacks: they do not wear helmets equipped with radio transmitters; they do not have the benefit of instant, computer-generated analysis in their ears. Finally, a fighter is alone. If his mind is still clear enough, he listens to himself. If not, he listens to instinct and fear.

Over time, however, there have been trainers who, in that frenetic minute between rounds, have been capable of saving a fight or a career, even a life: The Englishman James Figg, the singular master of eighteenth-century fighters. Ray Arcel, Mannie Seamon, and Whitey Bimstein—the great stalwarts of Stillman's Gym, on Eighth Avenue. And, more recently, men like Angelo Dundee and Eddie Futch. When Cassius Clay was blinded in the fourth round of his championship fight with Sonny Liston in 1964 and wanted to quit rather than face the fifth ("I can't see! Cut off the gloves!"), Dundee flooded his eyes with a sponge, and told him to "yardstick" Liston with his jab and wait till his vision cleared. "This is the big one, Daddy!" Dundee told Clay, who was near-hysterical in his protests. "Cut the bullshit! We're not quitting now." Clay knew he could trust Dundee not to send him to harm. His eyes cleared. History, under a new name, soon followed. Eleven years later, in the third Ali-Frazier fight, in Manila—perhaps the fiercest heavyweight title fight of all time—Joe Frazier's cornerman, the sagacious Futch, would not let him into the ring for the fifteenth round. "Sit down," he said quietly. "The fight's over." Frazier's eyes were so swollen that he could no longer see Ali's punches coming, and Futch, as Frazier's proxy, was surrendering. Frazier was not the type to surrender—his style, his ethic, was built around a willingness to absorb punishment in order to get close enough for the knockout blow—but he knew enough to bow to Futch's experience. Futch had in him the experience of death. ("I was there when Davey Moore got killed," Futch once said. "I was there when Talmadge Bussey got killed. I was there when Kid Dynamite got killed.")

These moments of inspiration—either inspired craft or inspired compassion—come rarely. But they happen. Like a healer or a shaman, the trainer is steeped in specialized knowledge. The wisdom of the corner is generally passed down orally, but there are important texts. Professor Michael J. Donovan, a middleweight champion of the mid-nineteenth century and a supreme teacher at the fin de siècle, wrote the definitive guide to the art of preparation, "How to Train for a Fight." Some of the professor's dicta are dated—"Before beginning real work, say about three days, every man should take mild doses of physic to act on the bowels, liver, and kidneys"—but, in the main, he is our contemporary. His advice on running, sleeping ("He needs ten hours' sleep and rest"), skipping rope, the "punching ball," the avoidance

Atlas urging Elvir Muriqi on in his rematc

PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY FINK



fight with Dan Sheehan: "Not 'if.' Never 'if.' If it's 'if,' he gets the jump on you. You fight inside because you want to fight there."

of drafts, and the care of a fighter's hands are part of the common wisdom without which a cornerman must be denied his degree. Donovan, like all the moderns, is an expert in athletic nutrition: "If you desire to increase your weight, drink Guinness' stout instead of Bass's ale." To all this a fighter must pay attention, and yet it is the trainer, as parent, as coddler and scold, who is there to direct the program.

The greatest trainer of the younger generation is a New Yorker in his mid-forties named Teddy Atlas. (Boxing, like baseball, has a genius for the comic-book name: Rocky Kansas, Kid Chocolate, Peppermint Frazer . . . Teddy Atlas.) For boxing, which has always been a sport of the marginals and the last-chancers, Atlas is of unlikely stock. He is a doctor's son. He is also the only doctor's son I know of whose most prominent facial distinguishment is the souvenir of a knife fight, a scar that begins at his hairline, skirts the corner of his left eye, and proceeds longitudinally to below the jaw. Fighting, in the ring and on the street, has provided Atlas with a kind of instant credibility: without his scar and the flattened nose, he might seem a nice-looking guy you'd meet on the ferry to Wall Street; with them, a fighter is forewarned—Do not mess with me. Atlas lives on Staten Island, where he grew up. He has also been housed on Rikers Island. He trained Mike Tyson when Tyson was a teenager; and he trained a heavyweight champion named Michael Moorer, an unsteady fighter of modest skills who never would have won the title without him. Atlas has trained a raft of contenders, but he has walked away from them when they would not listen. He has walked away from a fortune. Atlas, for all his imperfections, is a moralist. This is not an entirely common thing in boxing, now or ever. Atlas admires a code of professionalism. Because he is an honest and direct man in a sport dominated by the treacherous and the sly, he is a favorite of a small and loyal clutch of boxing writers—Ron Borges, of the Boston *Globe*, Mark Kriegel, of the *News*, Jack Newfield and Wally Matthews, of the *Post*—but, truth be told, he is also acquainted with less elevated sorts, one or two of whom have, at times, been ordered to wear the electronic ankle jewelry issued by the federal judicial system. "I'm not an entirely innocent boy," Atlas says.

Occasionally, Atlas's skills have been recognized beyond the cultish circles of boxing. When the choreographer and modern dancer Twyla Tharp decided, in her early forties, to get in shape and return to the stage, she called on Teddy Atlas. He trained her like a fighter, had her running up flights of stairs, shadowboxing, even sparring, after a fashion. In the ring, Atlas did not hesitate to hit her, not at all hard but enough to remind her to keep moving her head and feet—a creed common to both Nijinsky and Willie Pep. When, later, Tharp performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, some members of the audience tossed flowers on the stage; Atlas threw a pair of boxing gloves at his student's feet. Tharp hung up the gloves on the wall of her apartment, on Central Park West. She came to respect the cornerman's art. "In dancing, if you mess up you get embarrassed," she once told a writer for *Ballet News*. "In boxing, if you mess up you die."

Earlier this summer, I drove out to the Rocky Marciano Gym, in Jersey City, where Atlas was training a young light heavyweight, a Kosovar Albanian named Elvir Muriqi. There aren't many gyms left in the metropolitan area. Stillman's and the Times Square Gym are long gone. Gleason's, which used to be near the Garden, moved fifteen years ago to Brooklyn, under the bridge. There's Lou Costello's, in Paterson, the Red Brick, in East Newark, the Kingsway, in Manhattan. The Marciano Gym is not in a particularly elegant neighborhood—it sits squat next to a Punjabi auto-repair garage and near a vacant lot—but it doesn't resemble the rancid hotboxes of yesteryear, either. Trainers of the Stillman's generation would not recognize the Marciano as familiar territory. The first floor is a sleek mirrored room filled with the torture racks of the exercising classes: treadmills, StairMasters, Nautilus machines, free weights. Upstairs is the boxing area, with two rings and, dangling from a complex of exposed beams, a series of heavy bags, speed bags—the usual. It, too, is clean and, suspiciously, odorless. When I arrived, Muriqi, a sturdy but physically unexceptional figure, was loosening up, skipping rope, hitting the heavy bag, snorting all the while. The one familiar and comforting sight in the place was a small group of old-timers who sat on folding chairs and gossiped about a fight card they'd all seen a few nights before at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on Long Island.

Atlas was getting Muriqi ready for a rematch with a Massachusetts fighter named Dan Sheehan. At their first fight, at the Blue Horizon, in Philadelphia, Atlas had worked a kind of double shift, as both cornerman for Muriqi and commentator for ESPN2's Friday Night Fights, a regular gig. Muriqi has prospects, but, as Atlas told viewers (during the rounds) and his fighter (between them), his inexperience was showing against Sheehan. Muriqi was holding his own, but, in his frustration, his inability to finish the cloddish yet game Sheehan, he was throwing low blows; with each wince-inducing shot, Atlas betrayed distress.

"He's a little raw, I'm not going to lie to you," Atlas told the viewers. The TV audience could hear Atlas telling Muriqi to "stop the crap." The crowd at the Blue Horizon is a knowledgeable one, even in geopolitical matters, and they were offended.

"You fight like a Serb!" someone shouted.

With just twelve seconds left in the fight, the referee disqualified Muriqi for his fourth low blow. A young fighter with dreams cannot afford such a blemish on his record. Most of Muriqi's cornermen stood around crying or comforting their man. Atlas was unsentimental. With his headset on, he told the viewers, "Right now he's devastated. Now he's got to go back to the gym, enhance his training, or get into another business."

And so here they were, back in the gym. The rematch would take place in a few weeks, in Hyannis, on Cape Cod.

"I got to explain to him that he faltered in the last fight. He wasn't a pro, which is what you strive to become," Atlas told me as we watched Muriqi jump rope. "He wasn't prepared mentally to do the things a pro is prepared to do. It's like a lawyer in a courtroom who comes across an opponent who is tougher than he anticipated, or a doctor who opens a person up and it's worse than he thought. A professional sees what's happening and deals with it. My guy went in there, he was thirteen-and-oh, and thought it was going to be easy, and then he'd give a thirty-second sound bite to ESPN. Well, the other guy didn't want to coöperate, and that bothered his work. Pros don't allow themselves to be bothered from their work."

Atlas has been with fighters at the Garden and in the parking lot of Caesars Palace, in Las Vegas. Why was he bothering with the Kosovo Kid?

Atlas shrugged. He said Muriqi might turn out to have character. "He comes from a place where there's not much, and his father and sister fought for the K.L.A. for freedom. With that kind of pressure around him, maybe it means something," Atlas said. "Whether it's gonna help him transcend himself and be a pro, we'll see."

All good cornermen think of themselves as masters of the psyche. They are Freudians. Atlas is just more so. He is convinced that boxing is, in large measure, psychological, that the loser is the fighter who lies to himself, who finds ways to rationalize his passivity and makes a "silent contract" with his opponent: *I won't hurt you if you don't hurt me.* They clutch and grab and back up, and while they may think they're being clever they are really signing the contract.

Atlas walked over to Muriqi. He came up close to his man's face, right where he could be seen and heard, and he spoke calmly, sternly.

"Now, look, you've got to be thinking about July 7th," he began. "You won every round last time, but you didn't do the things you need to be a pro. This is why I hesitate to take guys at this level. I might not be too good at other things, but I do know this. I'm going to tell you things that will upset you sometimes, but it will make you better. In your mind, it's easy. What I'm trying to tell you is, it's not. You'll reach the point when it won't be easy. That's what we're preparing for.

"A pro cannot let go." Atlas paused, as if searching Muriqi's eyes for any trace that this was sinking in. "*A pro cannot let go.* You have to keep from letting yourself do what's easy and just be there. Everything is painful. Everything is painful. There's a difference between making things livable for yourself and doing more. There is pain if you want to be something different: a pro, a champion. And rich."

Muriqi smiled at this last word. *Rich.* He couldn't help it. Rich is what he wants to be. Atlas stepped away from him for a minute. He thinks hard about these speeches, and he does not mind showing that he is thinking. The fighter can wait. Atlas looked down and scratched his head, very much like a man wondering where he'd parked his car. Muriqi squinted. Then Atlas said, "So what are you going to do in this fight? What do you think?"

Muriqi seemed glad that the lecture was over. He looked eager to get the right answer to Teddy's question.

"Well," he began. "If I have to fight inside . . ."

"Wrong!" Teddy broke in. "I'm glad I asked. Not 'if.' Never 'if.' If it's 'if,' he gets the jump on you. You fight inside because you want to fight there. Never 'if.' "

After Muriqi finished loosening up, Atlas taped and padded Muriqi's hands and put gloves on him. Atlas himself put on a set of red punching pads, which look like flattened-out catcher's mitts: they catch punches. The two men got in the ring and began a kind of one-sided sparring, in which Atlas kept the mitts moving and Muriqi tried to sharpen his combinations. Fairly often, to keep Muriqi honest, Atlas threw a teasing punch at his face. The choreography was as intricate as anything in the Tharp repertoire. All the while, Atlas barked instructions, tips, warnings.

Between rounds, Atlas gave his fighter water, as if to a baby; there was great solicitude in the way he held up the bottle with one hand and kept a finger under Muriqi's lip, to prevent dribbling. This kind of physical intimacy, this babying, is unique to boxing. Bill Parcells does not water his fullback; Joe Torre does not massage the pitcher.

"Be good at this," Atlas told Muriqi. "Be *real* good. 'Cause what else you gotta do? You gotta be good at this!"

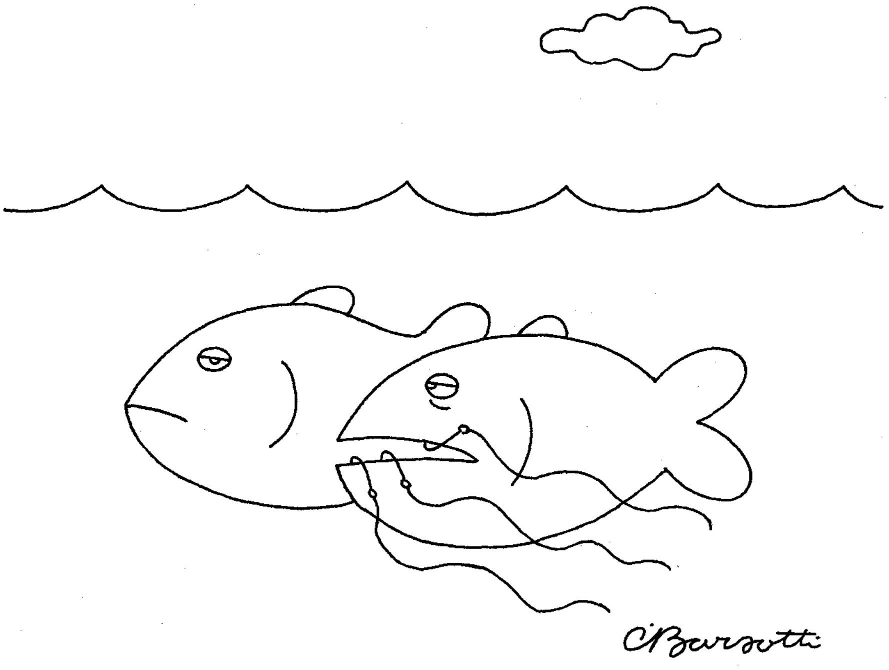
And then they sparred again, round after round. Soon Atlas's orange T-shirt was soaked through. He was a junior welterweight when he was a kid. He is neither junior nor welterweight now. And yet it was Muriqi who was breathing most deeply. With each punch, you heard those sharp explosions of breath that fighters make:

Phhh . . . hhh!

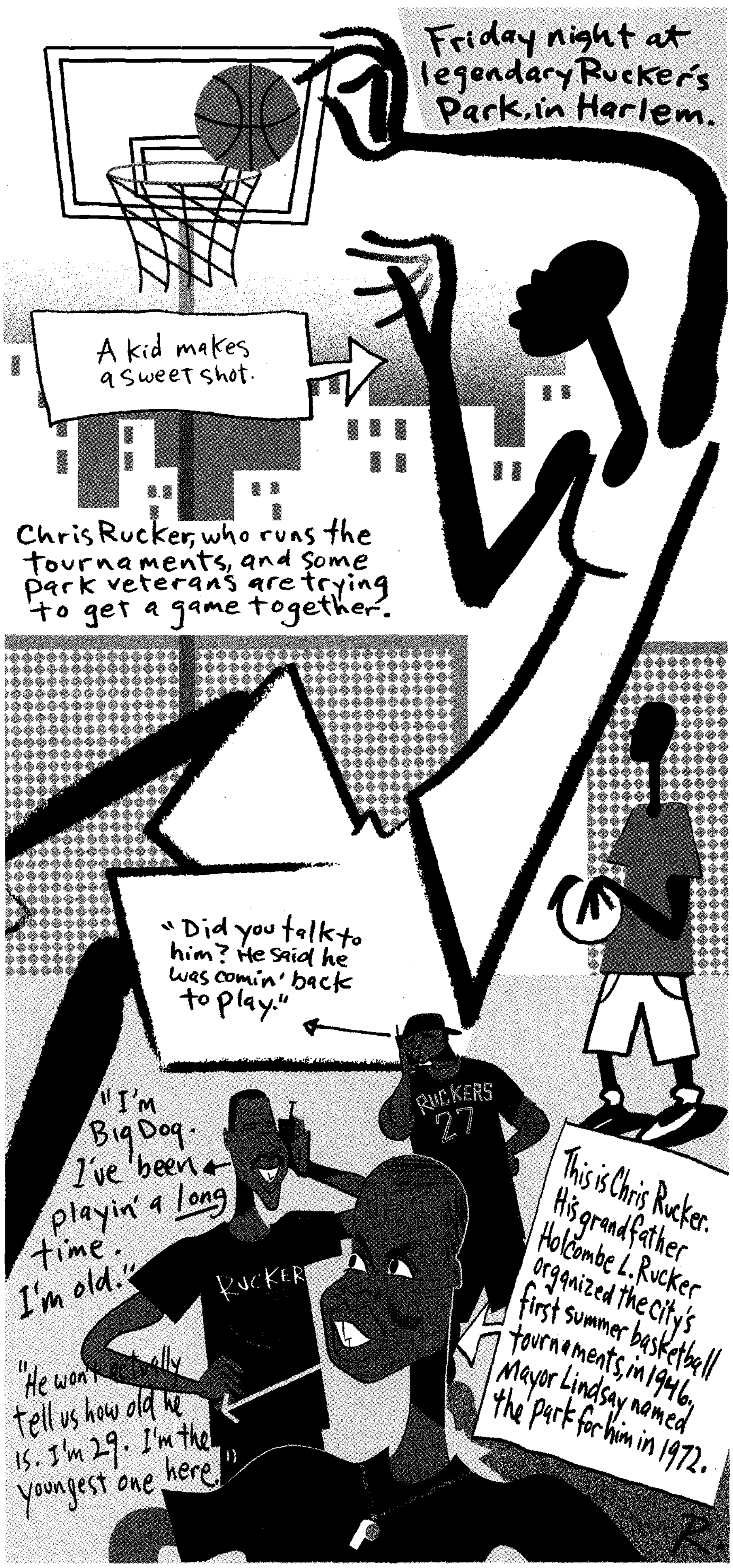
Ish! Ish! . . . Ish!

At one point, Atlas whacked Muriqi with a jab, a pedagogical point, and Muriqi backed off. He seemed shy. Atlas told him not to be.

"It's O.K. to be a little scared," he said. "Most people just chase that away so they don't have to think about it. No. Be



"Am I boring you, kid?"


Friday night at legendary Rucker's Park, in Harlem.
A kid makes a sweet shot.
Chris Rucker, who runs the tournaments, and some park veterans are trying to get a game together.
"Did you talk to him? He said he was comin' back to play."
"I'm Big Dog. I've been playin' a long time. I'm old."
RUCKERS 27
RUCKER
"He won't actually tell us how old he is. I'm 29. I'm the youngest one here."
This is Chris Rucker. His grandfather Holcombe L. Rucker organized the city's first summer basketball tournaments, in 1946. Mayor Lindsay named the park for him in 1972.
R.

scared. But *do* something about it. Make it work for you."

When it was over, there were situps, and a shorter lecture, and Atlas went downstairs to do some work on the treadmill. Before Muriqi went off to the shower, he told me he'd tried hard to get Atlas to train him.

"Teddy's been through everything in life," he said. Muriqi has just a trace of an accent, but it is a little more Bronx than Pristina. "When he was young, he fought, he saw things, he *knows*. Teddy knows what you're thinking. You can't bullshit Teddy. He sees everything."

Teddy Atlas's father, Theodore Atlas, Sr., was the sort of doctor who no longer exists. (Or, if one does, please send along a phone number.) He worked seven days a week, twelve to sixteen hours a day. He made house calls all over Staten Island. At least half his patients paid him only a few dollars or nothing at all. Some paid him with a cake, a Jell-O mold. He helped found Sunnyside Hospital, and when Sunnyside was torn down, in 1962, to make way for the Staten Island Expressway he helped found Doctors' Hospital. His dedication was absolute. He and his wife, Mary Riley, had five children. Their son Todd was born retarded and suffering from heart problems; he died during heart surgery when he was five years old. On the day of the funeral, Dr. Atlas went to the service and then treated a patient, a sick child.

"My father was the only man I've ever admired, and his strength was his problem," Teddy, Jr., told me one afternoon. We were sitting outside the gym on a curb, enjoying the sun. "My father could not show emotion," he said. "I was so proud of him, even if I didn't know it then. He was the only guy I've ever met—that's of all the pros, the wiseguys, the half-assed wiseguys, the real guys—the only one that I could trust, who never disappointed me, who was always who he said he was without even saying it."

When he was very young, Teddy used to go on house calls with his father. Even in the dead of winter, he'd drive along with him, hoping his father might say something, and then he would wait in the car, in the cold, while his father attended to the sick. His father worked

New Year's, Easter, and Christmas if he had to. "His great indulgence was that, once in a while, after working a full day, he'd fly down to Puerto Rico, gamble all night, take a walk in the surf, eat a piece of fresh pineapple, and then fly back for Sunday house calls. He didn't have time for other things. If he would come home from house calls on a Sunday and throw a football with me for ten minutes, it was like a miracle."

After his brother died, Teddy's mother suffered a nervous collapse and the other kids lived with relatives for about a year. Teddy stayed with an uncle who used the neighborhood saloon for day care. "I measured time at the bar by the number of Cokes and bags of potato chips they'd let me have," Atlas said. The commotion of his childhood, the absolute reserve of his father, he said, left him "a little screwed up." As a teen-ager, he was about as delinquent a juvenile as it is possible to be. He got into street brawls, he had guns, he robbed gas stations, convenience stores, bars.

"Other people did it to make money," he said. "I wanted to hurt myself to get my father's attention."

Atlas earned his epic scar in a street fight. He and a buddy were driving in the Stapleton neighborhood. Some guys cut them off. They cut *them* off. Everyone pulled over for the rumble.

"I got one guy through a window. I was doing pretty good there for a while! But then one guy hit me with a blackjack. . . . I ran for another guy, but he got out a double-oh-seven, a flick-blade knife. I remember thinking, That's a double-oh-seven. So I knew he had to come next with a downward motion, and I was trying to get close to him. Obviously I was too late. Bad move. I remember holding my face. My hand just went *into* my face. It felt like warm goo. Meanwhile, my friend was on the roof of the car. He was afraid. They thought I was going to die. They took me into a store and laid me out on the floor and covered me with towels. I filled up three or four towels with blood. My guy jumped over the counter, dialled 911, and said a cop had been shot. I remember in the ambulance the cop saying, 'The kid might bleed to death.' We went to Marine Hospital, in the Bailey section. They wheeled me in and all I could do was keep asking them to let my father do it. . . . The last thing I remember thinking about when I went under was my father's schedule. That night he showed up. There was no talking. I had four hundred stitches: two hundred on the inside, two hundred on the outside. He looked over the sutures and that was it."

If Atlas was in the process of breaking his father's heart, his father did all he could to conceal it. During another street fight, someone hit Atlas on the head with a tire iron. With blood all over his shirt, Atlas walked into his father's office. As always, the place was crowded with patients who would have to wait two and three hours to see Dr. Atlas. The nurse rushed to Teddy and led him in to see his father right away.

"But my father just said, 'He'll wait like everyone else,' " Atlas recalled. "When it was my turn to get stitched up, the nurse came in with a syringe full of Novocain. But my father said, 'He doesn't want that. If he's going to live like this, he should know what it feels like.' "

Along with a street friend named Kevin Rooney, Atlas was learning a little boxing. He worked out at the local Police Athletic League. He was a good puncher, with an even better chin. You couldn't knock Teddy out. At the same time, he was running wild. "I was a thief," Atlas said. "The problem was, I wasn't any good at it." One night, Teddy was arrested with a gun in his waistband as he was coming out of a bar that he and his buddies were thinking about robbing. Two days later, as he was awaiting word on that case, he got arrested again. This time, he and his genius friends were holding up a gas station on Forest Avenue.

"We got nothing, but, with the window rolled down, I shot into the air and we took off," Atlas said.

"So we're driving like idiots down the street and a cop car comes up. We'd been doing robberies for hours—bars, gas stations—and still we thought the cops were there by coincidence. So we turn and—boom!—there's a barricade of cop cars: seven of them. I had the gun. The cops had their guns out, and they were screaming at me, 'Don't you fuckin' move or we'll blow your brains out.' And all I kept thinking was Where can I hide the gun? The visor! That's it! The visor! So I start to lift the gun a little toward the visor and they're screaming, 'Put your hand down! Don't move!' None of it seemed real. The gun. The robberies. I was the dangerous one because I had some sense of crazy purpose—to get my father's attention. Finally, I flicked the gun under the seat, and they rushed the car and cuffed us and banged us around a little. We were under arrest."

This was Teddy Atlas's second felony arrest in three days. He was put in a cell on Rikers Island facing up to ten years in prison. Bail was set at forty thousand dollars. His father refused to pay.

On a Saturday evening in June, the night of the Mike Tyson–Lou Savarese fight, I had dinner with Atlas and Jack Newfield at Ballato's, on Houston Street. At dinner, Atlas predicted that Tyson would win in the first round. When I first met Atlas, three years ago, he predicted that Tyson would lose to Evander Holyfield. With Newfield, he had been more specific: Tyson would discover that he could not beat Holyfield right away and before too long he would foul—he would butt or bite Holyfield, anything to end it with a disqualification.

Later, after Tyson had indeed bitten Holyfield twice and lost, Atlas really went on a rant with Ron Borges, the boxing writer for the Boston *Globe:* "I called this one right. Not that I'm no freakin' genius, but I know human nature. I know fighters. I know this particular guy." Atlas could make the claim. He goes back twenty years with Tyson.

Atlas was in Rikers for a few weeks before his father finally did pay the bail (not least because his wife threatened to divorce him if he did not; Dr. Atlas put up his house as collateral). While Teddy awaited trial, Kevin Rooney introduced him to the fight trainer Cus D'Amato, who had led both Floyd Patterson and José Torres to world titles, and Teddy began boxing seriously under D'Amato's tutelage. Atlas avoided prison largely because D'Amato came to the courthouse and told the judge that he had met the young fighter, and that he had "special character." It would be a mistake to put him in jail, he said. D'Amato, an emotionally theatrical man, wept on the witness stand. The judge trusted D'Amato's evaluation and his intuition, and he released Atlas on probation under the condition that he live and work with D'Amato at his house and training camp upstate, in Catskill. Teddy was nineteen; D'Amato was in his late sixties.

D'Amato was by then semi-retired; he was past thinking he'd ever train another champion, but he enjoyed taking in young fighters. He filled them with his cracker-barrel philosophies: that a fighter has to convert his fears into strength, that he cannot afford to lie to himself. He looked a great deal like Rod Steiger, but in the corner he sounded not a little like Burgess Meredith in "Rocky." At times, D'Amato made his accommodations with the sleazy boxing world, but he also kept clear of men like Frankie Carbo and Blinky Palermo, the mobsters who controlled nearly every champion and contender of their era. Sportswriters loved him. Teddy Atlas came to love him, too. Atlas won a Golden Gloves title, but he would go no further as an athlete; he had a bad back. For some obscure reason, D'Amato saw Atlas as a trainer, a teacher, and put him in charge of the day-to-day training at his gym.

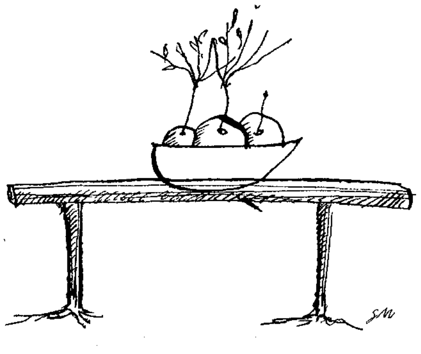
In 1980, Tyson came to Catskill from the Tryon School for Boys, an upstate reform school, and D'Amato gave him to Atlas to train. Tyson was thirteen years old, a hundred and ninety pounds, and soon D'Amato was talking about him as the next heavyweight champion of the world. There is no overstating the emotional bond that grew up between Tyson and Atlas. In Brooklyn, where Tyson lived as a child, and then in reform school, no one had ever paid him much attention, no one had ever cared enough about him to teach him, to put limits on him. After some bouts, Tyson and Atlas would kiss. When Tyson started crying before an amateur fight in Colorado Springs, Atlas knew just the right words to get him into the ring. The job was to harness his ferocity and confine it to the ring and, at the same time, keep together a fragile psyche.

D'Amato came to admire Atlas. Not only was Atlas taking good care of Tyson, bringing him along, fight by fight; he also saw how dedicated Atlas was to his lesser fighters, how he would drive them every week in a borrowed station wagon to a gym on Westchester Avenue, in the South Bronx, for Saturday-night "smokers," thrown-together amateur bouts, that helped raise their skills, their experience, their self-esteem. The place in the Bronx smelled of sweat and urine and cigar smoke, and at times the referee was drunk, and customers gambled on the fights, but it was worth it: the kids were learning. Sometimes, Atlas had to struggle to get D'Amato to notice.

"Cus would be watching 'Barney Miller' and 'M*A*S*H' all the time over at the house while I was in the gym till ten every night," Atlas said. "I'd beg him to come. I'd say, 'Cus, fuck "Barney Miller"! Come to the gym! Look at this.' And finally he saw that we had thirty kids and fifteen of them were pretty good. And he said, 'Atlas is a teacher.' And that made me feel really good."

For a while, Atlas saw Cus D'Amato as his surrogate father, a more present and expressive father. In all his years in Catskill, Atlas never got a salary, but still he was convinced that he was getting an invaluable education from a master and, together with D'Amato, building something important. The problem was Tyson. They were splitting over Tyson. As he got older, Tyson developed a sense of invulnerability. He could do anything. When he got in trouble in school for threatening a teacher or harassing girls (and that was often), Atlas would try to discipline him by suspending him from the gym, but then he would be overruled and undermined by D'Amato. The way Atlas saw it, D'Amato was cutting corners for Tyson, because, above all, he wanted one last champion, one more before he died. Nothing mattered as much, including his principles.

While Atlas was in Catskill, he had married a local girl named Elaine. They moved out of D'Amato's house and were living in a small apartment in town. One day in 1982, Atlas came home and saw Elaine and her eleven-year-old sister sitting at the kitchen table crying. They told Atlas that Tyson, who was then sixteen, had come on to the girl, had touched her, demanded things from her, sexual things. Atlas left the apartment in a rage. He was convinced that Tyson knew exactly what he was doing: by assaulting Teddy's eleven-year-old sister-in-law, he was flaunting his power over the girl and over Atlas.



"This was evil," Atlas told me. "That was taking what no one has a right to take. Sometimes it's better to take someone's life than the life within them."

Atlas went to a friend, a night-club owner in town. "I knew he had a gun. It was a .38 revolver. I flicked it open, made sure it was loaded, stuck it in my waistband, and left."

In the late afternoon, he worked with his young fighters and then waited around, thinking about what to do. It was getting dark. By chance, a cab pulled up in front of the gym, and Tyson got out.

"I was gonna do whatever I had to do. I was gonna make sure he understood what he'd done, what it meant to people—to real people—and that he would *never* do it again."

Tyson came toward Atlas, and Atlas grabbed him by the head and pulled him into an alley outside the gym. He drew the gun and jammed it hard into Tyson's ear.

"I said, 'You piece of shit! You piece of shit. Don't you *ever* put your hands on my family. I will kill you. Do you understand this?' If he would have smiled, if he would have said no, I would have killed him. And I would have lived with that. I'm not saying that's right, but at that time that's what it was for me. When I wasn't sure how to save his life, how to give him a chance, I pulled the gun away from his ear and pulled the trigger. I fired. At that moment, he knew. He got very weak. I could see that in his eyes. That was to let him know this wasn't anything other than what it was. His ear was probably ringing pretty hard and he fell backward a little. . . . Cus had never let Tyson know that the things he was doing to people were real. I was letting him know."

D'Amato's way of solving the problem was to hold on to Tyson and to send an emissary to Atlas with a deal: If Atlas left, he would get five per cent of Tyson's earnings for life. Though Atlas could not have known that Tyson would earn tens of millions of dollars, it was clear that he was going to be a heavyweight contender; Atlas refused the deal. Within a week, after going with his kids to the Adirondack Golden Gloves competition, he and Elaine left Catskill and never dealt with D'Amato or Tyson again.

"So now I had my precious apprenticeship, my Harvard degree," Atlas said wryly. "Elaine and I moved into my parents' basement, and I started working with fighters in Brooklyn."

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After dinner, Teddy, Jack, and I went to Newfield's place, on Charlton Street, to watch Tyson fight Savarese on television. The pre-fight clips ran through the history: D'Amato died in November, 1985; one year later, Tyson became, at twenty, the youngest world heavyweight champion ever, and the most disgraceful—the rape conviction, a prison sentence, the Holyfield "bite fight," the innumerable reports of wife abuse, street fighting. Before the Savarese fight, in Glasgow, Tyson reportedly pushed around the promoter.

Tyson had no problem with Savarese, whose fighting style resembled that of an oak. Atlas's prediction was on the money. Tyson hit Savarese with a left hook, and down he went. Savarese seemed relieved. He was alive, after all. Before it was over, Tyson managed to ignore the referee when he stepped in to separate the two fighters. Tyson felled the referee, too. He was, as usual, out of control. And after the fight—a thirty-eight-second fight—Tyson started ranting about eating his opponents' hearts, about eating their children, and about wanting to demolish the current champion, Lennox Lewis. "I'm Sonny Liston! I'm Jack Dempsey!" he raged on.

"Tyson loves this part," Atlas said. "He may be the best of all time at this part."

The team around Tyson made a fortune. Atlas struggled to pay his bills. In the next ten years, he had some good fighters, some contenders, but a fighter with Tyson's skill does not come around often. In late 1993, a heavyweight contender named Michael Moorer was looking for a trainer. He had exhausted the patience of many trainers already. Moorer was not quite in Tyson's class as a bad actor, nor was he Gentleman Jim. He wore a T-shirt reading "U Have the Right 2 Remain Violent." In high school, he pounded another kid's head—with a hammer, the injured boy's father insisted. His gun collection included Uzis, AK-47s, shotguns, and pistols. His curiosity about physics was unlimited. "I want to break a cheekbone to see what it looks like pushed in," he once announced.

And yet as a fighter Moorer was given to passivity. For all his potential, he seemed to make what both D'Amato and Atlas called the silent contract: the tacit treaty with an opponent to do no great harm.

Teddy's job was to get Moorer ready for the fight of his life, a heavyweight championship bout with Evander Holyfield, in April of 1994. (Tyson was in an Indiana prison serving time for the rape of Desiree Washington.) Moorer had heard all about Atlas, about the motivational speeches, the discipline, the code, and he thought he wanted it. But first, it seemed, he had to test both Atlas and himself.

Moorer trained for the Holyfield fight in Palm Springs, California. One night, at around ten, Moorer called Atlas and said, "I ain't running tomorrow."

Atlas smiled. "I had to think, Why would he call and warn me?" he said. "I put on my sneakers and go on over to his room. He pulls open the door a crack—he's got the chain on—and he says, 'What do you want?' I says, 'I came here to read you a fuckin' bedtime story. What do you think I came here for? You're running tomorrow. Open the door.' And he does, and the next thing you know we're going back and forth. We almost get into a fistfight. I tell him, 'You either run or get on a plane and fly home. But you'll have to live with not wanting to fight this fight. You're going to have to live with not being ready to take a heavyweight championship against Evander Holyfield.' We pushed each other. We were chest to chest. All that sharp stuff. He just wanted to see if I'd stand up when there was a risk for me. He was afraid. This was just after Holyfield had beaten Riddick

Bowe. He cursed, and we banged a little, and then finally he put his sneakers on and went out and ran into the night! And then the next morning at five he ran again. See, Michael wanted to be the champion of the world, but he didn't know how. And he had to test me, to see if maybe I did. His M.O. had been to quit in training camp. He wanted someone to make him be good, to make him be brave. But no one can make you brave."

The Moorer-Holyfield fight became as freighted with meaning for the trainer as it was for the fighter. A few months before, Theodore Atlas, Sr., died. Teddy buried his father, and he went to the gym that afternoon. "I finally understood things from my father's point of view. My father was not always the best father in the world, but he was the best professional."

At Newfield's, we watched a tape of the Moorer-Holyfield fight.

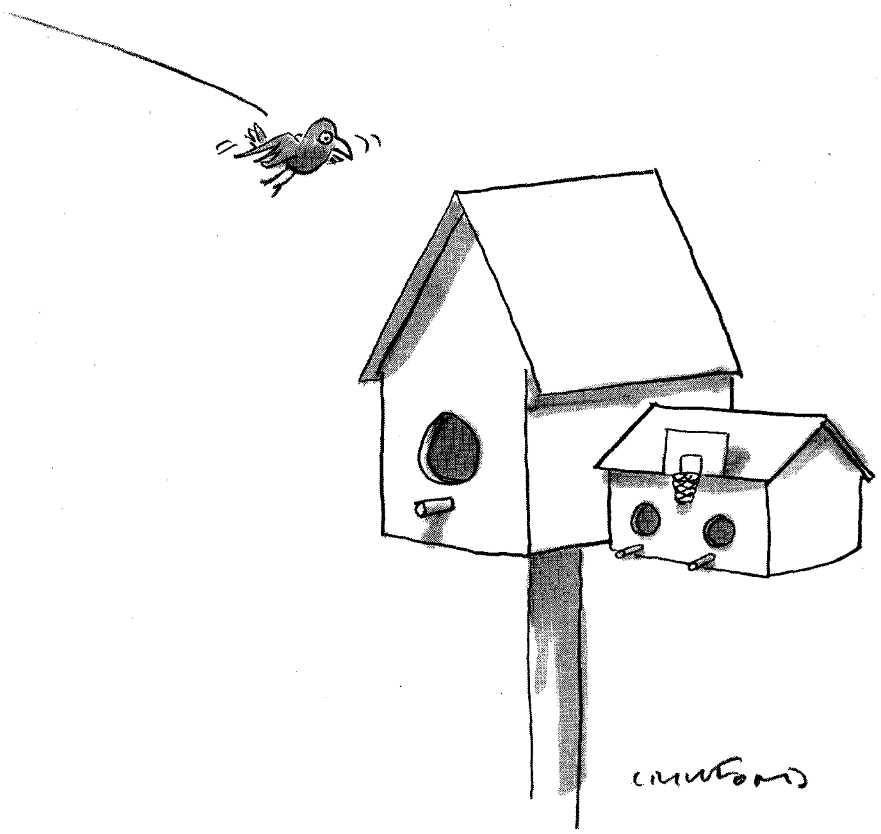
"You know, I've never seen it since that night," Teddy said. "Michael was filled with self-doubt, and I saw that I had to help him face the fight. I had to validate a lot of things. It was almost as if, well, if we hadn't won, it would be almost as if my father didn't exist."

What followed was not the most remarkable fight anyone had ever seen (at times, the proceedings were as listless as an August afternoon in Savannah), and yet it was the most inspired moment of training, of coaching, imaginable. Time and again, Moorer would sign on to the silent contract, he would back away, clinch, punch aimlessly, as if he were killing time and waiting for a bus. And every time Moorer reached the critical list, every time he seemed about to check out of the fight, Atlas was in his face, shouting, "Back this guy up and do what we did in training. Otherwise don't come back to this fuckin' corner! Do you hear me!" After one of those harangues, Moorer opened a cut over Holyfield's eye. Then he receded again.

After eight rounds, Moorer was not doing enough to win. He was mainly finding ways not to get hurt. It was the most curious thing: Holyfield was clearly exhausted, in bad form, but Moorer wanted no part of him.

In Holyfield's corner, his trainer was saying things like "Breathe deep" and "Relax" and "Jesus loves you."

Atlas, as the consultants like to say, was more proactive. Before Moorer got back to the corner, Atlas took the stool and sat in it and started screaming, screaming as loud as a man can scream. Moorer, breathing deep, sweat pouring down his face and body, looked down at him, incredulous.



"Do you want me to change places with you? You want me to fight? You want me to change places with you? Listen! This guy is finished." Atlas now got up from the stool. Moorer sat down. Atlas kept at it, but with an actor's modulation, for surely he must have picked up the cadences from "Requiem for a Heavyweight." He hit every note just right.

"There comes a time in a man's life when he makes a decision to just live, survive—or he wants to win. You're making a decision just to survive. You're doing just enough to keep him off ya' and hope he leaves ya' alone. You're *lying* to yourself, and I'd be lying to you if I didn't tell you that. And if you don't change you're going to be cryin' tomorrow! Now go out there and back him up and fight a full round."

After every round until the last, the twelfth, Atlas kept beating the same themes:

"You're blowing it! And you're gonna cry afterward because he'll lose the next fight and not this one. This is the fight of your life! This is the rest of your life!"

"Michael, in your *mind* you are doing your best. But you're not doing your best. Have I ever lied to you?"

Inspired at last, Moorer started hitting. Just in time. He won a split decision and the heavyweight championship—a title that, even if briefly held, guarantees a man tens of millions of dollars. Atlas's achievement was arguably greater than if he had brought Tyson to the title, for Tyson's talent was enormous. Michael Moorer was probably the least gifted heavyweight champion since Primo Carnera.

In the ring, Moorer went to embrace Atlas, but Teddy somehow could not let up. "You coulda done more, Michael," he said. And then Atlas wandered around, looking for his two young children.

"I felt like I had buried my father, and now I wanted my kids," he said.

Atlas and I were sitting in a pizza place not far from Marciano's Gym, in Jersey City. Things were going all right for him. He drove a red Lexus sports car that Moorer had given him after the title fight. He and Elaine had just built a house. He had his ESPN job and his fighter, Muriqi. But there was no big money. Atlas would have got eight hundred thousand dollars of Moorer's eight million for the Holyfield rematch, but the two men fell out when Moorer considered switching management.

For a while, Moorer was happier with his new trainer, Freddie Roach, because, he said, "Freddie allows me to be me."

When I repeated Moorer's line, Atlas laughed. "My job was *not* to let Michael be Michael," he said. Moorer lost to Holyfield in the rematch, and he has more or less disappeared from the scene.

Moorer used to call Atlas from time to time, usually when he'd been drinking. He made overtures to him to come back. But Atlas refused the pleading. Once, when he was furious with Moorer, he wrote a letter accusing the fighter of betrayal. It began without a salutation: "I won't call you by name. You don't have a name as far as I'm concerned. I am writing this for one reason—so you don't get a free ride thinking and telling yourself lies." At one point, I asked Atlas whether he was being too tough, too unforgiving. After all, he'd been given second and third chances, he'd been forgiven more than once.

Atlas paused awhile, and then he said, "There's a chance you are right. What's the sense of being so strict with other people? But you have to understand my world. I'm not dealing with stockbrokers or doctors. This is a world where if you don't come back in the proper way I can't be a top trainer. There are certain balances, certain codes that have to be answered to and paid for. When I'm in a gym demanding that a person make certain concessions, I have to have a certain landscape to do that in. By giving someone too much room in this world means you lose. Michael called me from a bar drunk, and then he got arrested in Tennessee for driving into a ditch. I told him to remember who he was, that he shouldn't be there, hanging out with those jerkoffs he hangs out with. He told me he loved me, and I said, 'Look Michael, love yourself and get out of there.'

"You see, boxing is a great equalizer. It's a metaphor for a lot of shit. In boxing, you get to see everything. People are exposed. The temptations are big, and they're contained in a small area. And the serpent is always either money or ego. But I can't walk away. I couldn't just quit it all. This is what I do."

A couple of weeks later, I flew up to Hyannis to see Elvir Muriqi's rematch with Dan Sheehan. The fight was part of a Friday-night ESPN2 card, and the network was promoting it as The War at the Shore 3. The arena, the Cape Cod Melody Tent, is the summer venue for a lot of geezer rock bands. Chicago was a sellout.

The dressing rooms were in a shed beyond the tent. When I got there, about a dozen fighters and their trainers, some with family and girlfriends, milled around nervously in a couple of dim rooms. Muriqi tried to nap on a couch, but without much success. All the fighters looked nervous, from the most promising heavyweight to the eternal set-'em-up (one ancient from Panama had a record of 8-42-1). They shadow-boxed, they stood stock still and stared at the wall, they gossiped with one another—no matter what they did, you could tell they were nervous.

Atlas walked in and looked around. "This never changes," he said. "Through the annals of time, this never changes."

I stopped by the other dressing room and saw Muriqi's opponent, Dan Sheehan, a beefy kid with a square jaw. He stood up. His trunks were of red sequin, like Dustin Hoffman's gown in "Tootsie." Muriqi wore black.

The ESPN producer told the trainers to get their fighters ready at nine; this would be the first televised fight of the night.

As Atlas greased Muriqi's brow, he softly told him, "You know what you got to do. Pressure makes you forget. The pro remembers."

They marched into the tent. About half the seats were filled, mostly with Irish kids from around the state who were there to see their friends. One of them was Dan Sheehan. As soon as the fight began, it was pretty clear that Muriqi should win. His mechanics, which were adequate, were practically balletic compared to Sheehan's. But, round after round, Muriqi let opportunities pass. He would strike once and then step back, as if to admire his handiwork. He would duck a punch but then make nothing of it. In Atlas-ese, he was not doing what needed doing. After every round, Atlas told him these things in his usual terms: "Punch more! Make the choice to punch!" "Stop lying to yourself!"

As Atlas came down the steps with the stool and settled into the pit to watch Muriqi in the fifth, he turned to me and said, "He's making the choice just to get by. He's satisfied, but I can't let him be satisfied. I have to tell him. I gotta be the bad parent."

Muriqi finished well in the sixth, the final round, but he never really hurt Sheehan. This did not promise well for his dreams. He will not be rich, not from boxing.

As we waited in the ring for the decision, Muriqi and Sheehan embraced. Once, twice, three times. Sheehan kissed Muriqi on the brow. Fight fans are often stunned by these shows of affection, but they are genuine; they seem like gestures of mutual relief, like passengers who have just survived a dangerous flight. *We made it.* The ring announcer gave the decision: Muriqi on all three cards. Muriqi went to embrace Atlas, but Atlas, almost imperceptibly, stepped back, patted Muriqi on the shoulder. He was not through teaching, even now.

"You gotta throw more punches," he told him. "You gotta do better now, or you won't later."

The next morning, I flew back to LaGuardia with Atlas, and I asked him why a fighter like Muriqi, with decent skills and the willingness to listen, could not follow up on his corner's repeated instructions.

"It's the pressure, that dome of pressure that the civilian can't quite comprehend," he said. "Nature, everyone's nature, is to avoid what's gonna bring you closer to danger and risk. The reason he didn't throw those extra punches, no matter how much he listened and nodded yes to me, was because he allowed his weaker nature to tell him, 'You don't *have* to do this.' The basis of nature is to survive. What I'm telling him is against nature. I'm telling him how to be a brute and not just survive. A trainer's got to lead a fighter into a dark place, and not too many want to go." ♦

TWO STORIES

BY ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

HE WANTS FORGIVENESS FROM HER

The door opened, and into the room came a fashionable, beardless young man wearing a stovepipe hat and a short jacket. He seemed to be in his late thirties. His appearance and manner of dress, indeed his entire bearing, radiated importance—that of a doctor, a lawyer, or, at the very least, an accountant. Especially authoritative were his pince-nez, which sat well down on his nose and were fastened to the buttonhole in his lapel by a thin black cord.

"Well, what's the good word?" my father said.

The young man spoke half shyly and hesitantly. He began with these words: "Rabbi, *you're going to laugh* . . . "

It turned out that, some twelve years before, the young man had been the fiancé of a respectable Warsaw girl. Then he met another girl and married her. People warned him that when a man breaks off an engagement he is required to get a letter of forgiveness from the other party. But he was in love with his new wife and was ashamed to return to the first fiancée to request the letter. He was especially ashamed before his in-laws. In short, he went off to live with the second girl, moved to another city, and hoped that time would smooth everything over. So a match dissolves—big deal!

However, bad luck tagged after the young man. He opened a shop, but it failed. He established a factory: that, too, did not succeed. His wife had one child, a second child, a third child, but all of them died. The young man was not religious; still, these misfortunes reminded him of the wrong that he had done to his first fiancée. He began to ponder this, and started dreaming about it at night. Before long, he became obsessed with the thought that he would have no respite until he got a pardon from his former fiancée, who, he now heard, had also married. The news prompted him to leave his business and come to Warsaw, where he discovered that his former fiancée lived in our—that is, my father's—district. That is why he had come to ask my father's assistance in getting a letter of forgiveness.

Father heard him out before saying, "Yes, it's true. When a person is wronged, repentance is of no avail. One must request forgiveness."

Father then sent me to bring the man's former fiancée to the courtroom.

Since she lived on Khlodna Street, the young man gave me money for the round trip by droshky. It was weird, sitting in a droshky without packages. The boys outside gaped in wonder. The shopkeepers, men and women, laughed and wagged a warning forefinger at me. I leaned my head against the side of the droshky and felt the springs swaying under me. I was so light I was afraid I might fall out. Nevertheless, I felt comfortable there. I closed my eyes and contemplated the strangeness of human relationships. Because a young man in Lodz or Kolish can't sleep at night for thinking about his former fiancée, I, a young boy from Krochmalna Street, have to be in a droshky on a Wednesday noon.

I passed through the elegant gate of the woman's building, climbed up a marble staircase to her apartment, and rang the bell. A maid clad in a white apron opened the door and asked me what I wanted.

"The lady of the house is being called to the rabbi's courtroom."

The woman soon appeared. She was in her late thirties, still pretty, but her high bosom was heavy, and she had scattered strands of gray hair. She looked as imposing in her womanliness as did her former fiancé in his manliness. She asked me why I had come.

"Your former fiancé is summoning you to see the rabbi . . . my father," I said.

The woman's big dark eyes widened. "What fiancé? And what rabbi?"

As I told the woman everything I had heard, I noticed the colors changing on her face—now pale, now red. One moment, she was about to burst into laughter; the next, she turned sad. At one point, I thought she was going to yell at me and drive me from the apartment. Then she seemed to soften. "Do you already understand these matters?" she asked.

"I understand everything," I said, with boyish boastfulness.

"Wait. I'm going to phone my husband."

After I had waited for a long time in the corridor, the young woman came out wearing a coat and hat.

"Let's go."

I told her I had money for a droshky, but she said she'd pay for the droshky herself. Soon I was sitting next to her—a lady from Khlodna Street going to meet her former fiancé, accompanied by a boy with red side curls who knew bizarre secrets and was mixed up in the affairs of strangers, thinking wild thoughts.

The woman herself did not interest me that much, but I couldn't take my eyes off the horse. I sat to the side, where I could observe the horse's broad hindquarters and long tail, which swayed and seemed to tell me mutely, "I don't care whom I carry or where I go. I don't know anything. I'm a horse, and I'll always be one. When I eat oats, I have the strength to pull this droshky. I don't care whether a priest, a rabbi, or a Turk is sitting in it." From time to time, the horse's tail swished, a sign that its hindquarters were satisfied.

As I climbed the stairs to our apartment with the woman, I noticed that her dress was narrow and long. She

ERICH HARTMANN, "MEA SHARIM, JERUSALEM" (1961)/MAGNUM

had to take small steps and was unable to negotiate two stairs at a time. The heels of her shoes were high and shiny. Pharmacy fragrances clung to her. She took me by the sleeve, as if to lean on me for protection. Her gloved hand was both light and firm. A strange, forbidden warmth ran through me, turning me into an absolute fool.

The meeting between the once engaged couple was like something out of a fairy tale. It also reminded me of the story of Joseph and his brothers. The man didn't recognize the woman at first. They looked at each other in amazement, alternating between forgetfulness and remembrance. Finally, the woman declared, "Yes, it's you."

"I recognized you right away," the man said, intending this as a compliment.

"How long has it been? No, better don't tell me," the woman said.

"How the years fly by!"

"When did you start wearing glasses?"

"About three years ago. Maybe four."

"Are you nearsighted or what?"

"Yes."

"I've become fat."

While they were exchanging these banalities, Father perused a holy text, stroking his beard and rubbing his forehead. Just as I had been totally absorbed in the horse's hindquarters before, I was now all eyes and ears regarding this couple, who had almost become man and wife but had become estranged on account of a love affair. Both of them now had someone else, yet a closeness remained. They addressed each other in the familiar form. They stood face to face and couldn't get their fill of looking at each other.

"What kind of man is your husband?" I heard him ask.

"A good man."

"Are you happy with him?"

"One can't always be happy," she replied.

"Fania," he said. "I've never forgotten the wrong I did."

And his glasses clouded over as if someone had breathed a mouthful of vapor on them.

The woman did not reply at once. Her face began to twitch. I saw a mist in her eyes that might become a tear, but, too proud after twelve years to cry in his presence, she held it back.

She raises her head. "I've already forgotten everything."

"Fania, God has punished me on account of you."

"How can you say that? One can never be sure of such things."

They talk; they murmur. Father waits, but he's impatient. The talking and murmuring of this formerly engaged couple smacks of sin.

"You're a married woman," Father tells her. "And he, too, has a family. Give him forgiveness, and the One Above will help both of you."

"I forgive him," the woman declares. "And God will surely forgive him."

"It's preferable for the forgiveness to be in writing," Father says.

The word "forgiveness" makes me want to laugh. In Yiddish, that word—*mekhile*—also has another meaning, and not a nice one: "rear end." I want to burst out laughing like a little boy, but I restrain myself with all my might. Father writes a few words in Hebrew. He makes two copies. The man has to give her a declaration of forgiveness, and she has to give one to him—and both have to sign them.

"I can sign only in Polish," the woman says.

"All right, as long as it's signed," Father says.

She takes the pen in a grandiose manner, rests her finger on the holder, and, without removing her chamois glove, signs in a quavering calligraphy with her present husband's last name. Her signature evinces education, wealth, and worldliness. Only people who live on Khlodna Street and have a marble entrance staircase and a bell on their door have signatures like this. The man writes his name in Yiddish, but his signature, too, has a modern flourish.

"What's your name?" Father asks. "I can't make it out."

"Zigmunt."

"How are you called up to the Torah?"

"To the Torah?"

"Sign again," Father orders. "With your Hebrew name."

The young man signs "Zalman."

Father gets a ruble, and I have a forty-kopeck coin in my pocket. The couple leave the apartment together. It seems to me that Father wants to call them back and warn them that they are not allowed to leave together, but before he can say a word they are already on their way downstairs.

I run out to the balcony, waiting to see them emerge from the front gate. But it takes a long time, and I don't know what to think. Did they remain in the courtyard? Are they inside the gate? Or perhaps I missed them, and they have already gone. I'm very impatient. Finally, they appear and he seems to be holding her by the arm. Not actually holding her, but supporting her elbow with his hand. Strange, how slowly they're moving. They stop repeatedly. They go not toward Khlodna Street but toward Gnoyna. They're so deep in conversation that they clearly don't even know where they're going.

I have already read the romances of the popular Yiddish writer Shomer, and my imagination is working overtime. Perhaps, I think, the man wants to take her to his castle. Perhaps he is a count. Perhaps she, the woman with him, is in disguise. Perhaps he will shoot her with a pistol and then take his own life. Perhaps the entire matter of forgiveness was only a ruse. Perhaps I should run down to the street and follow them. But no—they would recognize me. I remember the money in my pocket and decide to go to Twarda Street to buy myself a storybook. Not one, but two. Not two, but six.

I run to Twarda Street. The news vender stands there, wearing a little red cap. His small bookrack is packed with books: Sherlock Holmes, Max Shpitzkopf, and titles like "Terrible Secrets," "The Secret of the Kaiser's Court," "The Captive Princess," "The Enchanted Orphan Girl," "The 1,200 Thieves." Each title pulls me like a magnet. Each booklet has its own mystery, cleverness, and bizarre intrigues. But I can't buy them all. I have to choose.

I spend my last kopeck and carry home a stack of books. The street and the boys on it no longer concern me at all. I have only one wish: that my joy not be interrupted, that I have the time to read everything from beginning to end.

And at some point I muse that I, too, would like to write a storybook—full of secrets and mysteries, full of counts and orphan girls and enchanted thieves, starring a bride and groom named Fania and Zigmunt, who haven't seen each other for twelve years and who then meet at the rabbi's house, whereupon their love is rekindled and begins to burn like a hellish fire.

A GUEST IN THE SHTIBL

One afternoon, a gigantic, broad-shouldered man with a ruddy face, blond beard, and wild eyes entered the *shtibl*, the small Hasidic prayer room, for the Mincha service. His garb was neither long nor short. He wore a fur cap, and a hooded caftan that looked as though it had been made in the Middle Ages. His boots had broad uppers, into which he had tucked his baggy trousers. He removed a tiny siddur from his pocket and began reciting the Order of Sacrifices.

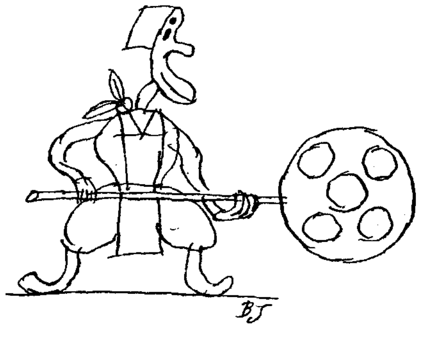
He prayed with great devotion, but the words he uttered were as hard and heavy as stones. People watched him and shrugged.

"Who is that?" they asked.

After prayers, the worshippers greeted him with "*Sholom aleichem*" and asked where he was from.

"Oh, from far away."

"From where?"



"Russia."

"Which town?"

He named one the Warsaw Hasidim had never heard of.

"And what's your name?"

"Avraham."

The way he pronounced "Avraham" made them realize that he wasn't a Jew like other Jews. After several exchanges, they discovered that Avraham was a convert. He was a peasant from a remote Russian province, who had come to live on this Jewish street in Warsaw, where he was now a tinsmith. When asked why he had become a Jew, he cried out, "Because the Jews have the truth!"

Jews were amazed. They were even more amazed that he had come to pray in a Hasidic *shtibl* rather than a regular shul, but everyone was welcoming and friendly to him. When he was called to the Torah for an *aliya*—summoned as "Reb Avraham ben Avraham"—the convert touched the Torah with the ziziths of his tallis, kissed it, and recited the blessing in a deep bass voice that seemed to come from a barrel or a tomb. The younger boys giggled and pinched one another. The Torah reader just managed to contain his laughter by swaying and frowning. Yes, here before us was a Jew, a pious Jew—in the shape and form of a goy.

Before long, the convert began causing trouble. Hasidim habitually talk during prayers, but when the convert heard someone chatting he turned red and then pale with anger and yelled, "*Nu*—sh-h-h!" And put a finger to his lips.

During the Silent Devotion, he stood immersed in prayer for a long time. The prayer leader hadn't the patience to wait for him to conclude and began the repetition of the Silent Devotion. This caused the convert to miss the Kedusha, which angered him.

"You're rushing through the prayers," he complained. "You're forgetting that you're speaking to God."

The convert had apparently studied the holy texts and knew the laws, for he asked, "Do you count money so quickly, too? One has to pray as one counts money."

The Hasidim conceded that the convert was right, but Hasidim are still not Misnagdim. They would apologize to the convert and admit that he was right,

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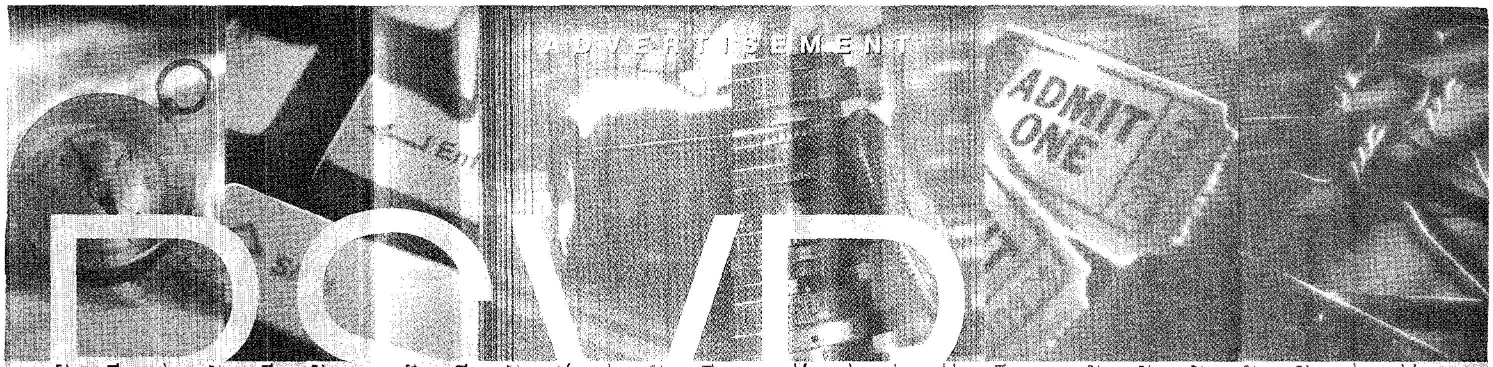

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"It's a very senior moment—he's dead."

• •

but the next day the scene repeated itself. The convert yelled, pounded the table with his heavy fist, and shouted that the Messiah wasn't coming because the Jews were sinning.

But the boys had even more problems with him. They all talked during prayers, ran around, pinched one another, and snickered. The convert raised the roof. What annoyed him most was that the youngsters did not say "Blessed be He and blessed be His name" and "Amen" at the proper places. His own resonant "Blessed be He and blessed be His name" and "Amen" shook the walls. His goyish piety awakened in the boys, and even in the grownups, an irresistible desire to laugh. Even the *chazan* himself had to laugh into his fist in the middle of his prayers.

On Yom Kippur, the convert did something wild: instead of wearing socks, he stood barefoot. His feet were gigantic, and his unusually wide big toes were topped by misshapen toenails. A mere glance at those feet and one couldn't help laughing. On Yom Kippur night, during the cantor's Kol Nidre, the entire congregation was in a paroxysm of laughter. They beat their chests during the "For the Sin" prayer and chuckled into their High Holydays prayer books.

The convert stood with a tallis wrapped over his white linen robe. When he pounded his chest, it echoed throughout the sanctuary, as did his pitiful weeping. His form stood out from all the other tallises and linen robes. He wore a gilded yarmulke that made him look not like a Jew but like one of the saints the Gentiles paint on church walls. The Hasidim concluded that they would have to rid themselves of this Ivan—but how? Could Jews drive away a goy who had taken upon himself the yoke of *Yiddishkeit*? Wasn't he a *tzaddik*, a saintly man?

After the evening service, the convert did not go home. Instead, he spent the night in the *shtibl*. All night long, he recited Psalms. The next morning, before the Torah was taken out of the ark, the convert made a scene. The trustee began auctioning off the *aliyas* to the Torah. Hasidim outbid one another. The trustee chanted, "Six guldens going once, six guldens going twice, six guldens . . . going . . . going . . . six guldens and ten—"

As soon as the trustee had called out the last words, the convert screamed at the top of his lungs, "What's going on here? Money, money, money!"

He stamped his bare feet, waved his fists, and shouted, "Guldens, guldens, guldens . . . It's Yom Kippur! You boors! You're sinning! It's a desecration of God's name!"

"Peasant!" someone screeched.

"A goy remains a goy," a youngster called out.

"You're a goy yourself," the convert replied. "Yom Kippur is a holy day. The holiest day of the year. God forgives our sins, and you're doing business, business . . . just like they did in the Holy Temple long ago. . . . That's why it was destroyed. That's why the Messiah isn't coming!"

And the convert broke into tears—a hoarse, manly weeping that sent a shudder through everyone. The congregants fell silent. Then the trustee called out, "We must support our *shtibl*. We need coal for the winter. We have to pay rent."

"On Yom Kippur, one is forbidden to do business in the presence of the Torah," the convert replied.

"You don't have to teach us how to be Jews."

"It's forbidden," he said.

After a while, the Hasidic *shtibl* got rid of the convert, and he went to pray in a study house. But he still caused problems on the street. He preached morality to the prostitutes who stood by the gates. He went to the square where the thieves hung out and delivered a sermon half in Yiddish, half in Russian, showing them where in the Bible the phrase "Do not steal" appeared in the Ten Commandments. Even at that time, there were homes on the street where women cooked on the Sabbath, and the convert went there to rebuke them, predicting catastrophes, epidemics, even pogroms. It wasn't long before the children were tagging after him and teasing him with "Ivan, Ivan, there you go. Ivan, Ivan, stub your toe!"

But his greatest outrage was reserved

for the young girls who wore short-sleeved, low-cut dresses. The convert ran after them, calling them "wantons" and "whores"; they were sinning, he shouted, and causing others to sin.

On the street, there was a teahouse where boys and girls would gather on the Sabbath to crack pumpkin seeds, flirt, and dance. The proprietor went about with her hair uncovered and would occasionally pour cold water into the urn or surreptitiously push the iron poker into the fire. The convert, aware of what was going on here, became a self-appointed guardian of Sabbath observance. The thieves and hooligans who frequented the place cursed him and told him that he'd wake up one day with a knife in his back. The girls laughed at him and escorted him out of the teahouse with catcalls.

The convert complained to Father, rebuking him for not tending to the street. Father justified himself before the convert as if he were one of his own, telling him how little attention today's generation paid to ethical pronouncements. Father hinted to the convert that he should rather pray, learn to be a Jew, and not try to improve others, for it was wasted effort. But the convert pointed out to Father the verse in the Pentateuch where one is commanded to rebuke one's fellow-man.

Father agreed, but showed him a law stating that if one knew for certain that one's moralizing would not be efficacious, and that the next fellow was sinning wantonly and willfully, then one should no longer preach to him. "Everything has its limit," Father declared.

"Because of them, the Messiah won't come and we'll remain in exile forever."

"Forever? God forbid!"

"They're inviting a new destruction."

The convert refused to be consoled. The sinning on the street caused him endless anguish. His pale eyes shone with a non-Jewish bitterness.

One Sabbath, people witnessed another bizarre scene: the convert was being led away, flanked by two police officers. Because it was forbidden in Russia to convert to Judaism, the convert had committed a crime against the regime. Apparently, someone had informed on him to the authorities. Or perhaps he had committed another offense. The police closed his workshop, hung a lock on the door, and sealed it.

Some Jews suggested that they should make inquiries and find a lawyer for the convert, but no one had any money or time for such endeavors. After a while, the lock on his door was removed and a soda-water shop opened up. The convert seemed to have vanished. Only now did the people on the street begin to understand what had happened. A goy had sacrificed his life for *Yiddishkeit*, and Jews had mocked him. He was locked up somewhere, and no one was making any effort to free him. Some said that the convert had been sent to Siberia. The *cheder* lads concluded that he had either been hanged or burned at the stake, and that his soul had expired with the words "Hear, O Israel." People on the street felt guilty.

They thought that they would never see the convert again. But not long after the Germans occupied Warsaw during the First World War, a youth named Chaim told the following story: Walking along Dluga Street one day, he had felt hungry. He saw a shop with Hebrew lettering. A young man stood in the doorway and said to Chaim, "You're hungry, eh? Then come in."

Chaim entered. He was served a bowl of grits and a heel of bread. Other young men sat at a long table. After the meal, a bareheaded Jew with the beard of a teacher and the gold-rimmed glasses of a rich man entered and began preaching: the true Messiah had already come, and his name was Jesus of Nazareth. This Jew then talked about the little lamb, the Paschal sacrifice, and Isaiah's prophecy that a virgin would give birth to a son. He explained the difficult verse in Psalms 2:12 by saying that it meant "Kiss God's son."

Chaim then realized that he had fallen into a den of missionaries, but he was afraid to abandon his meal and flee. Suddenly, the convert appeared. It seemed that he lived there among them.

Yes, Jews had driven him away, and he had gone over to the missionaries. "I'm a Jew. A Jew!" the convert asserted. "But the Messiah is already here. You're waiting in vain. Jesus is the Messiah. . . . Jesus of Nazareth!"

When this story was repeated back in the *shtibl*, the Jews there declared, "That's the problem with goyim. They don't have the patience to wait." ♦

(*Translated, from the Yiddish, by Curt Leviant.*)

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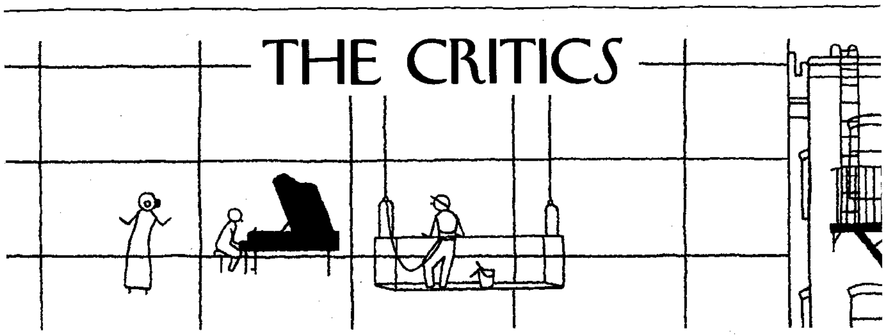

THE CRITICS

A CRITIC AT LARGE

NO RULES

New interpretations of the massacre at the Munich Olympics.

BY DAVID DENBY

"What kind of rubbish is this?" With those words, a German policewoman named Annaliese Graes opened the negotiations with Palestinian terrorists during the siege at the Munich Olympics, in 1972. The conversation took place at about ten minutes past eight on the morning of September 5th, in front of a residential building on Connollystrasse, a pedestrian-only street in the Olympic Village. Inside the building, on the third floor, eight Palestinians were holding a group of Israelis hostage. The Palestinians—who belonged to the Black September group, a wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization unacknowledged by Yasir Arafat—had entered the Olympic compound at 4:10 A.M., going over an unguarded wall with the aid of some American athletes. The Americans were returning from a drinking binge and apparently noticed nothing wrong with their late-night companions: the terrorists wore tracksuits, and carried Kalashnikovs and hand grenades hidden in sports bags. After a pleasant chat, the Palestinians and the Americans parted company. Unimpeded, the terrorists arrived within minutes at the building on Connollystrasse that housed the Israeli team. The two leaders of the group, Issa (Lutiff Afif) and Tony (Yusuf Nazal), both of whom spoke German, had been working inside the compound for some months—Issa as an engineer, Tony as a cook. The two men knew their way around. They may also have been given information by Stasi agents working within the East German Olympic delegation. Apart from the two leaders, who were both committed militants, the Palestinians were children of the refugee camps in Lebanon; they had been trained in Libya, and then assembled in Munich the day before the operation without the slightest notion of what their mission was.

The eight men walked into the building, which was unguarded and unlocked, and entered one of the suites occupied by the Israeli team. In the fight that followed, two Israelis were killed, two escaped, and nine were taken hostage—four wrestlers and weight lifters (the other athletes were inadvertently passed over), and five coaches and referees. In the morning, Issa went outside to confront Annaliese Graes. He demanded the release of two hundred and thirty-four prisoners held in Israeli jails and two held in German prisons—Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, the notorious German terrorists who had been arrested just a few months earlier. If they were not released by 9 A.M., the Palestinians would begin shooting the Israelis.

Graes's peevish distaste was a good indication of the official and unofficial German attitude, which, throughout the crisis, was marked by a curious mixture of naïveté, chagrin, and pained indignation. The Germans considered it outrageously unfair that the Palestinians had acted on German soil, and their continuing sense of victimization may well have affected their judgment and their performance. As the rest of the world looked on in horror and amazement, the hostage crisis played itself out as a sinister comedy of ineptitude, a moral and military disaster whose ironies, to this

AP WIDE WORLD/KURT STRUMPF

A terrorist on the balcony of the apartment in which the Israelis were held hostage.

day, are almost too excruciating to bear.

The official records were kept secret by the Bavarian state government until 1992, but two new accounts of the incident, both entitled "One Day in September"—an Oscar-winning documentary, produced by Arthur Cohn, and a book, based on research for the film, written by the British journalist Simon Reeve (Arcade; $25.95)—draw on that evidence to fill gaps in the story. The two accounts are highly skilled and detailed, but they are also unsatisfactory in various ways. The movie, which was directed by the Scottish filmmaker Kevin Macdonald (it will be aired on HBO on September 11th), is a tense, moment-by-moment re-creation of the event which offers physical verisimilitude and interviews with surviving participants and suspense-building Philip Glass music but nothing in the way of historical context or reflection. It treats the violence and despair of the crisis as the raw material of a thriller. Reeve's book does the same—it's a page-turner—but Reeve goes somewhat further, offering background notes on Jewish and Palestinian history and the Black September group, and he fleshes out the long aftermath of the affair, in which Israel's Mossad agents took revenge over a period lasting almost twenty years. Yet, whatever one's reservations about the two projects, they both make it clear enough why the Bavarians felt they had something shameful to hide.

By 1972, the Second World War had been over for twenty-seven years, but popular contempt for the German character—ridicule mixed with fear—still appeared in movies, in the press, in everyday conversation. For the West Germans, the XX Olympiad was an extraordinary opportunity to rid the country of its lingering shame. The games would show off the "New Germany"—benign, democratic, hospitable. "The Games of Peace and Joy," as they were called, became a showcase for the regime of Chancellor Willy Brandt, a longtime anti-Nazi trying to refurbish the tattered traditions of German humanism and liberalism. The Germans opened their arms, and six thousand reporters and technicians showed up, while newly installed satellite technology made the games available to almost a billion television viewers worldwide. Two thousand security personnel were hired, but because the Germans were particularly eager to erase any memories of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, which Hitler had turned into a display of militarism, the guards were kept away from the residential Olympic Village itself. Dressed in pale-blue uniforms, unarmed and incapable of protecting the athletes, the security forces looked like the chorus in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

When word of the siege reached Bonn, Brandt's Minister of the Interior, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, immediately flew to Munich. But Genscher, as a federal official, had little authority in the state of Bavaria. Local officials made the key strategic decisions and relied on their own personnel. (In American terms, it's as if the F.B.I., the Treasury Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms were forbidden to play a role as the Houston police tried to solve a national crisis.) The first thing the Munich authorities did was to persuade Issa to extend the deadline. In Israel, Golda Meir's government had categorically refused to release prisoners in exchange for the lives of the athletes, and the Germans were playing for time.

But time was exactly what the president of the International Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, refused to make available. The elderly Brundage, an

MAGNUM

The bus that took the terrorists and their hostages out of the Olympic Village. Photograph by Raymond Depardon.

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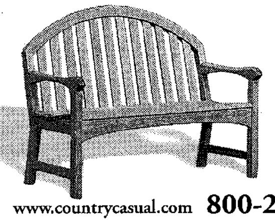

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American Olympics "idealist," wanted to keep the games pure, and he pressured the Germans unrelentingly to make a settlement with the terrorists. Brundage seemed concerned less with the athletes' fate than with the unspeakable intrusion of politics into his paradise; he refused to call a halt to the Games. It is not known to what degree the Germans responded to Brundage's pressure, but their initial impulse to play for time gave way to hapless schemes. They offered the Palestinians money if they would give up the hostages, and Genscher and other officials offered themselves as substitutes. "You know what happened to Jews in the Third Reich," Genscher told Issa, "and you have to understand that this cannot happen in Germany [again]." Genscher's courage was admirable, but for sheer inability to get the point, his remark takes the cake. He actually seems to have expected the terrorists to avoid the diplomatic error of reminding the world of German crimes. The Germans wanted empathy and moral understanding from desperate warriors who might not have been at all upset if a great many Jews were killed. Many of the Germans were shocked by what they took to be the *unreasonableness* of the terrorists' acts, and there is a grim historical joke in their shock. The irrationality of the Nazis' crimes was so great that the crimes were, at first, widely dismissed as implausible. The liberal officials in Munich, faced with violence of comparable extremity, had trouble taking it in; they were baffled by people who were as serious about violence as their own fathers' generation had been, thirty years earlier.

Along with millions of others, I watched the standoff on television, and I remember the agonizing absurdity of it as a TV experience: the terrorists in their black balaclavas sticking their heads out of windows and preening for the cameras; the grotesque irrelevance of what was said by commentators; the gnawing fear that something would go horribly wrong. Watching the events, we spectators were suffused with irony—the events seemed to have been staged for us as a movie of the week. And it dawned on some of us that journalism had fatally lost its innocence. The camera crews hustling to capture the action, and Peter Jennings narrating from a terrace across the street from the room in which the Israelis were held, were precisely the kinds of efforts that prevented the Germans from mounting an effective rescue operation. Munich had no trained antiterrorist squad of its own, but police officers selected to "volunteer" agreed to charge the besieged apartment. The men crawled across the top of the building, approaching its airshafts—and then the Munich authorities realized that the Palestinians must have been watching on the tube. The raid was called off.

Macdonald and Cohn use three kinds of footage: the original TV material; interviews with participants; and film shot in the Munich locations, where a hurtling camera takes the point of view of a Palestinian running up the stairs or of an Israeli escaping. In these scenes, the film is printed in such a way that the action staggers ahead in little jumps, a technical trick that slows the moment down, dragging out the suspense to the breaking point. Macdonald's narrative technique is impressive. But watching this stuff is also slightly degrading: we are still being asked to become involved in the events in a way that is divorced from their historical meaning. Our involvement, we realize, would not be possible without the dangerous importunities committed by TV cameramen in 1972. In this regard, the movie and its audience are mildly complicit in the catastrophe that followed.

Terrorists know that it's extraordinarily hard for governments to find the "right" response to a hostage crisis. A liberal government that favors negotiations may be revealed as weak, a conservative one that takes violent action as ruthless. One reason the Germans were so petulant in 1972 is that they felt, fairly or not, that they did not deserve to be so unpleasantly burdened by someone else's struggle. But after their initial confusion they decided to act. They persuaded the Palestinians to postpone the deadline again while agreeing to fly both the terrorists and the hostages to Egypt from the Fürstenfeldbruck military airfield, which was twelve miles from Munich. There they set a trap: fifteen Munich police "volunteers," wearing Lufthansa uniforms, were positioned inside the Boeing 727 that the terrorists were to board and were instructed to kill or capture the terrorists when they entered the airplane. At the same time, five snipers were positioned around the airport, two on the runways and three on the roof of a building. All this was in place as the terrorists and the hostages approached the airport in a pair of helicopters.

What the German scheme produced at Fürstenfeldbruck was a chaos of almost unprecedented awfulness. Five snipers weren't enough for eight terrorists, and the snipers were inadequately armed and, for some reason, were not equipped with bulletproof vests. Nor were they equipped with walkie-talkies, which would have kept them in touch with their commanders. The field was unlit, and one of the snipers on the tarmac, who had the best view of the area where the helicopters would land, was directly in the line of fire of the three on the roof. Armored cars, which could have led a charge against the terrorists, were left behind in Munich. By the time they were dispatched, they got stuck in a traffic jam of curiosity seekers headed for the airfield.

The helicopters arrived in darkness sometime after 10:30 P.M., and Issa and Tony walked to the parked airplane. But, minutes before the helicopters landed, the police inside the 727 decided that they might shoot one another in the enclosed cabin or be killed by a terrorist's hand grenade. The mission, in a word, was dangerous. So the Germans had walked out. When Issa and Tony discovered no one—not even a crew—on the 727, they raced back to the helicopters. At that point the police opened fire, and for two hours everyone shot at everyone else in the dark. The Germans never gave an order to rush the terrorists from multiple angles. Near the end of the battle, the Palestinians machine-gunned the two helicopters and blew one up with a hand grenade. All nine Israelis, who were tied up inside, were shot or were burned alive. Five of the terrorists were killed in the battle and three were captured. After the action was over, one of the armored cars arrived at last, and shot a sniper and a German helicopter pilot by accident.

In the most bitter of the filmed interviews, Zvi Zamir, the head of the Mossad at the time, makes snarling jokes about the blunders of the Germans, whose famous efficiency had suddenly deserted them. But a larger betrayal lay in wait. On October 29th, eight weeks after the siege, two Palestinians hijacked a Lufthansa airplane, after boarding it in Beirut, and demanded the release of the three surviving terrorists. The Brandt government immediately agreed, and the Palestinians were flown to Libya, where they were welcomed as heroes. Several of the German officials interviewed by Macdonald now think that this second hostage affair was a setup—an arrangement with the P.L.O. intended to buy some peace and quiet on German soil.

The Germans failed to protect their guests and then caved in to blackmail, and I would have thought that anyone could see that they were the chief targets of Cohn and Macdonald's film. But one prominent viewer thinks the movie is simply an attack on the Palestinian cause. Writing in the British newspaper the *Guardian*, Professor Edward Said, who was for years a member of the Palestinian National Council, maintains that the film reinforces the popular equation of Palestinians with terrorism. Said believes that the film should have concentrated on the sufferings of the Palestinians at the hands of Israel. But he is possibly disingenuous about the role played by terror in the P.L.O.'s thinking. "I don't imagine that there is a Palestinian who does not think that the Munich adventure was a disaster for the Palestinian cause and people," he writes. On the contrary, as Said must surely know, Black September's leaders and P.L.O. figures such as Abu Iyad hailed the Munich "adventure" as a success, for it brought the Palestinian cause to the attention of millions of people who had been only dimly aware of it. And Bruce Hoffman, in his authoritative study "Inside Terrorism," describes the affair as "the premier example of terrorism's power to rocket a cause from obscurity to renown." The attack succeeded as a provocation, too. Three days after the Munich massacre, the Israelis, in a vengeful mood, bombed at least ten P.L.O. bases inside the Syrian and Lebanese borders, killing some two hundred innocent people, including women and children. If it was the Palestinians' objective to reveal the "true" face of Israel, it worked. The Israelis also turned to assassination, cutting down prominent Palestinians on the street, in their doorways, in their beds. In the spring of 1973, Ehud Barak himself took part in a successful attack in Beirut on three P.L.O. leaders suspected of planning the Munich affair. Barak wore women's trousers and a wig for the operation, and walked down the streets of Beirut with his arm around the waist of another agent. The gangsterish war between P.L.O. and Israeli agents went on for years, producing reprisals and counter-reprisals. What began as "rubbish," fuelled by ineptitude and loathing, became a bonfire. ♦

"Perhaps, given time, but not too much time, you could learn to love me."

BOOKS

THE GENDER GAME

A new book claims that culture, not nature, has kept women from athletic equality.

BY REBECCA MEAD

The United States women's soccer team that romped to victory in last summer's distaff World Cup didn't have a real opponent. There was, granted, the team of Chinese women whom the Americans beat in a penalty shoot-out in the tournament's final game. But they didn't have to compete against the ultimate challenger: a preëxisting notion, in the American imagination, of soccer as it is played by a team of accomplished men. Owing to this accident of sports history, the Women's World Cup opened up a vista onto how the world would look if women enjoyed what Colette Dowling, in her new book, "The Frailty Myth" (Random House; $24.95), calls "physical equality." The remaining battle to be fought by the women's movement, Dowling contends, is the fight for women's movement—for the freedom to enjoy the strength and power of their bodies, whether haring around the playing field or striding down the sidewalk.

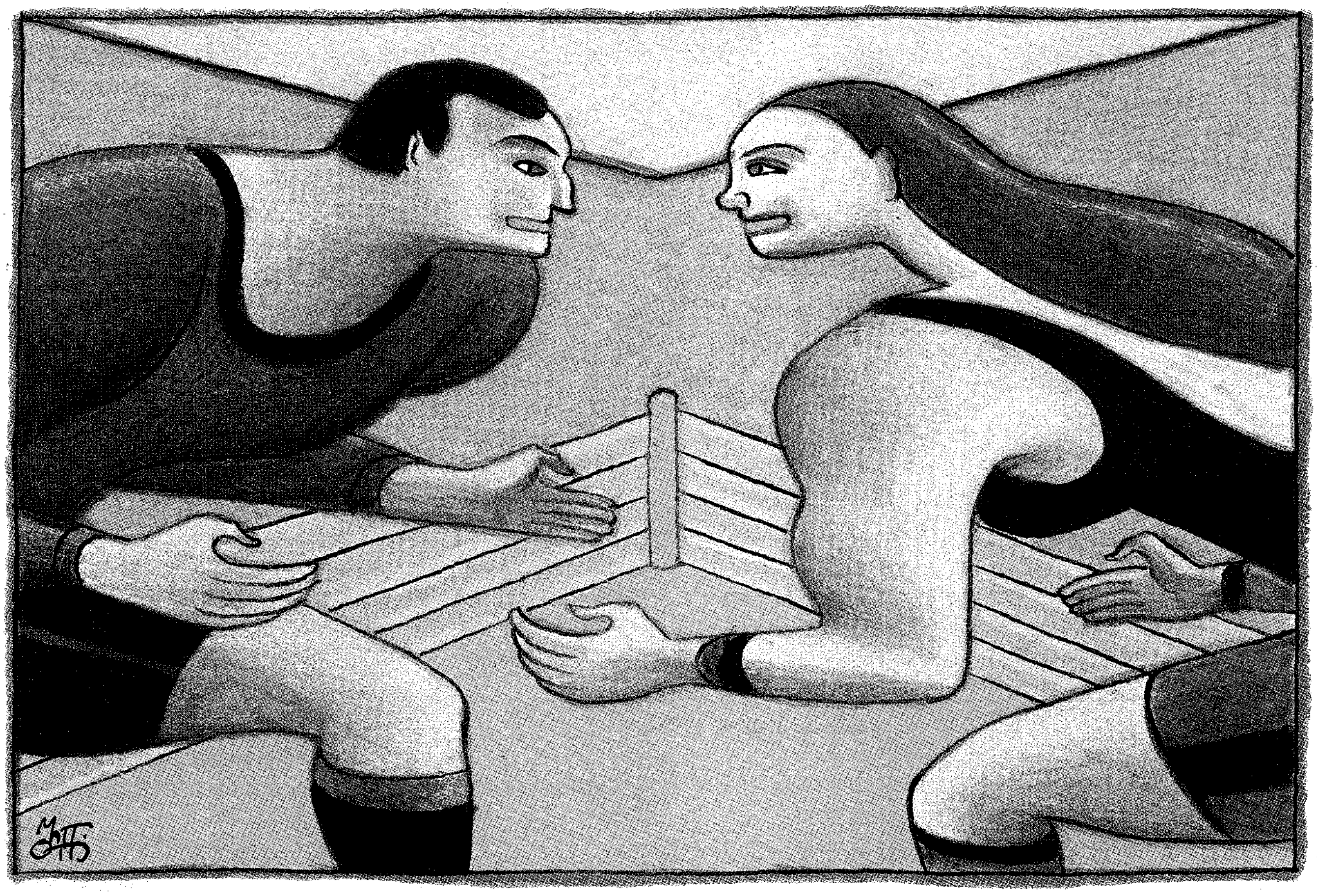
Dowling's earlier books include "The Cinderella Complex," a best-selling psychosocial polemic in which she argued that women have an unconscious tendency to make themselves emotionally dependent upon men, and "Maxing Out," in which she argued that women have an unconscious tendency to undermine any financial success they might achieve. (It was based on her own experience of getting wildly into debt after making a bundle on "The Cinderella Complex.") In "The Frailty Myth," women and the unconscious are at it again, this time participating in a culture-wide prohibition on women's being as active as men, or occupying as much space, or having their athletic achievements taken as seriously. "For centuries women have been shackled to a perception of themselves as weak and ineffectual," Dowling writes. "This perception has been nothing less than the emotional and cognitive equivalent of having our whole bodies bound."

Dowling compares the idea that men will necessarily be better athletes than women because they are taller and more muscular with the myth that men are the more intelligent sex because they have bigger brains. The apparent disparity in athletic achievement between boys and girls, she argues, has nothing to do with innate ability and everything to do with training and expectations. She offers some provocative data to support this position, including a study that showed a group of second-grade boys outthrowing their female peers while using their dominant arm (with which, being boys, they had had plenty of practice) but doing no better than the girls when both sexes were using their nondominant arm. "Throwing like a girl" really means throwing like a novice, something that could be corrected if girls, as Dowling puts it, "got out of the doll corner" and practiced like boys. The idea of girls being able to kick their brothers' asses on the softball field is an appealing one; but Dowling does not address the more difficult question of whether one would really want a nation of daughters who have spent interminable hours throwing a ball against a wall, rather than engaging in the kind of play through which they develop empathy and imagination.

Dowling acknowledges that men have, thus far, outperformed women in strength and endurance; but, she says, the "strength gap" is closing, as a result of Title IX, the 1972 ruling that required schools to provide equal funding for women's sports, and of role models, from Billie Jean King to Mia Hamm. In recent decades, women have been setting new world records at a far swifter pace than men have, and that's unsurprising if you compare the athleticism of today's top sporting women with that of their punier predecessors. But Dowling pushes the argument too far when she suggests that, following a biomechanical method used to compare the performance of male weight lifters of different heights, women's performance relative to men's should be adjusted for their smaller size. By this calculation, Florence Griffith Joyner, the world's fastest woman, was faster than Carl Lewis, the world's fastest man. This is a neat political point, but a spurious one in the competitive arena. The average Chinese woman is shorter than the average American woman: if the Women's World Cup final had been biomechanically adjusted, the Chinese team might have walked away with the trophy.

Dowling takes a brief tour through the history of women's sports, and it's a dispiriting view. Although women in the Middle Ages may have been allowed to develop their horseback-riding skills, they were not allowed to participate in élite competitions, except as prizes for the male competitors, which is not the same thing at all. The Victorians, as usual, were spoilsports, arguing that women would ruin their reproductive potential or otherwise compromise their femininity if they engaged in vigorous exercise. (The fad for bicycling in the late eighteen-hundreds was discouraged by commentators who disapproved of women developing the set, aggressive look of "bicycle face.") Throughout the twentieth century, women's growing presence in sports has been accompanied by an unsubtle insinuation that athletic achievement and femininity are mutually exclusive: it seems that most accomplished female athletes have been suspected of being lesbians. The fact that some accomplished female athletes were indeed lesbians does not diminish the invasiveness of the attention paid to, say, Mildred (Babe) Didrickson, an Olympic gold-medal winner whose eventual marriage generated headlines of relief. Dowling notes that the mass-media fantasies of the sex lives of female athletes have changed in recent years, with the sports babe being the new paradigm. (One imagines that lesbianism in, say, Anna Kournikova, would be more of a titillation than a threat to the readers of the magazines that have featured her on their covers, particularly if she were getting it on with, oh, Martina Hingis.)

Dowling seems to feel dutybound to deny that girls might be less competitive than boys, even when her evidence is not entirely convincing. Jere Longman, in his recent book about the United States women's soccer team, "The Girls of Summer," includes as evidence of the team members' competitiveness a story about a Halloween pumpkin-carving contest that turned into "gourd warfare," with the women hiding their pumpkins from one another to prevent their ideas being stolen. But try to imagine Latrell Sprewell and Patrick Ewing carving pumpkins together and the gender gap reasserts itself. Dowling concedes that boys and girls may experience competition differently, referring to a study showing that one of the things teen-age girls like about sports is winning the approval of others, whereas boys simply want to win. And she makes the worthwhile point that coaches and parents should be aware of the difference in motivation when dealing with girls, so that their interest in sports can be encouraged rather than blunted.



Colette Dowling argues that throughout history women have been debilitated by a pervasive bias against female physicality.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

Dowling's larger argument is that the frailty myth blights women's lives in every sphere. She cites preliminary research suggesting that exercise may result in beneficial structural changes in the brain. She points out the link between inactivity on the part of younger women and osteoporosis among the elderly. She reminds her readers that exercise is known to ward off depression. She cites statistics that indicate a correlation between teen-age girls exercising and lower rates of teen-age pregnancy, alcohol use, and smoking. (Of course, you'd think the kind of girl who chooses to exercise might be different from the kind of girl who chooses to smoke, drink, or get pregnant.) And she approvingly reports that a new model of beauty may be emerging which is based on musculature rather than emaciation: although the body of the volleyball player Gabrielle Reece may be just as unobtainable as that of Kate Moss, the attempt to get there is less likely to be injurious to your health. Dowling's feminine ideal is a kind of ponytailed amazon who breastfeeds her baby at the sidelines of the soccer field, as Joy Fawcett, of the United States team, has done, and who, like the Guardian Angel Lisa Sliwa, sneers at weakling male predators.

In fact, Dowling's position obliges her to celebrate female aggression, because, while cheerleading for women's athleticism, she also warns against romanticizing female athletes as the moral guardians of sports, untainted by the egotism and greed that are endemic among their male peers. The women of the W.N.B.A., she complains, have been cast as wholesome, fun-loving, and unselfish—a stereotype of female virtue which serves as a counterbalance to the brattish stars of the N.B.A. By this measure, the women's soccer team broke new ground last year not just by winning the World Cup but by immediately thereafter undertaking a lucrative exhibition tour, a move that enraged soccer's governing body. The team members were similarly demanding when they next went on strike for more money. After a bitter dispute, they were finally awarded paychecks equivalent to those already being earned by the less accomplished men's soccer team. Despite Dowling's emphasis on the new goal of "physical equality," it seems that when it comes to old-fashioned economic equality women are still looking for a level playing field. ♦

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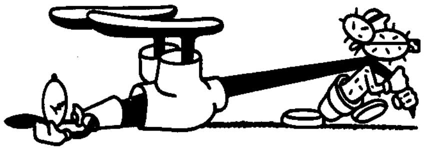
BRIEFLY NOTED

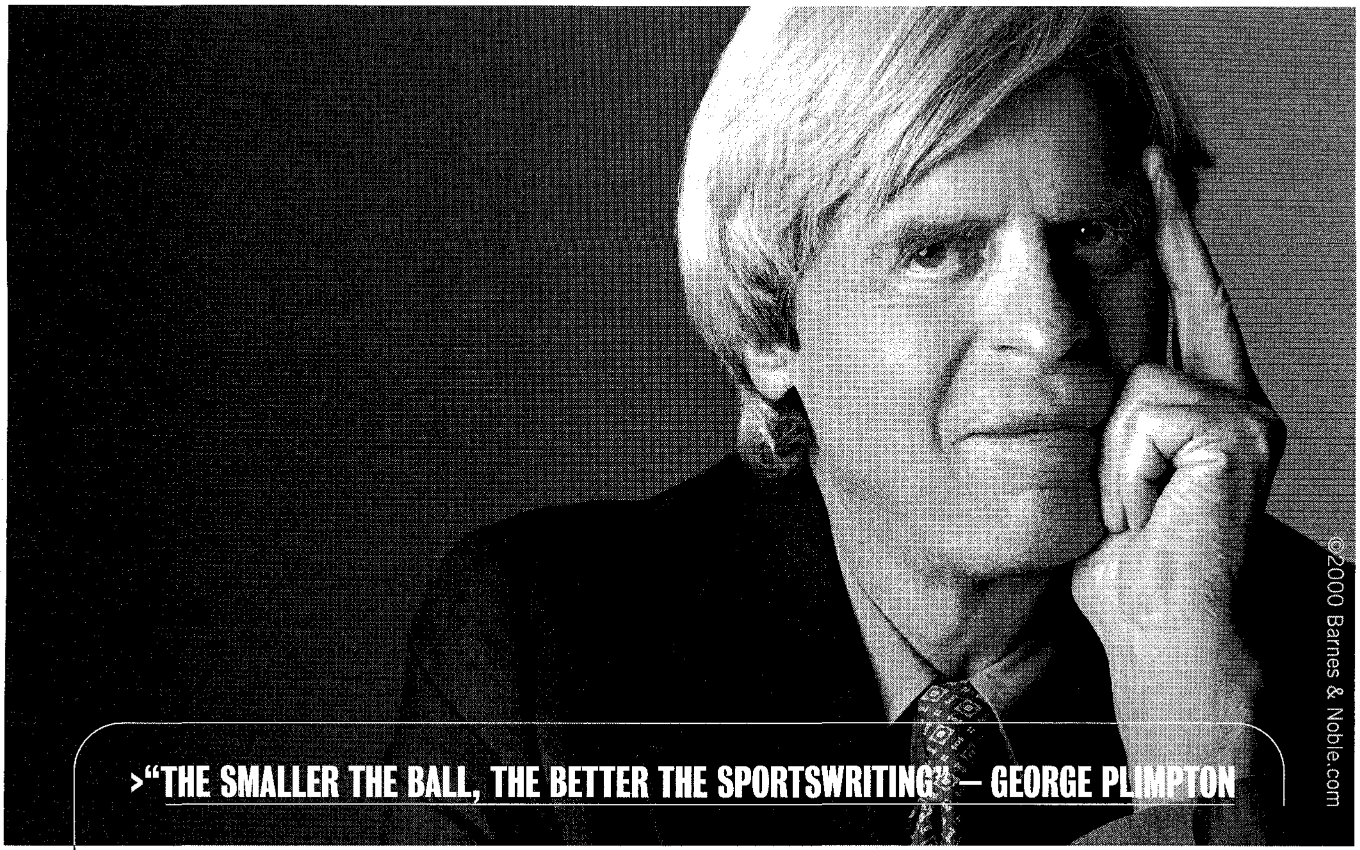
La Grande Thérèse: The Greatest Scandal of the Century, *by Hilary Spurling (HarperCollins; $20).* Spurling first encountered the confidence woman Thérèse Humbert while researching a biography of Matisse, whose parents-in-law were among Thérèse's victims, and she rightly decided that Thérèse's stupendous frauds were an achievement that deserved a book of their own: this slim, charming volume is the result. Even as a child, Thérèse was famous for her tall stories, and was often sent to cajole her family's creditors; as an adult, she claimed to be the heiress to huge fortunes. "*Je veux, j'aurai*" became her motto: "What I want, I will have." With the help of her father-in-law—who became Minister of Justice in 1882 and a high court judge in 1889—she transformed her preposterous fantasies into a money-spinning racket that enabled her to borrow millions against her expectations. "She lied as a bird sings," one acquaintance observed, and even at her trial, in 1903, some of her victims found her spellbinding narrative difficult to resist.

Trading Twelves: The Selected Letters of Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray, *edited by Albert Murray and John F. Callahan (Modern Library; $24.95).* This contrapuntal exchange of letters spans the nineteen-fifties, when Ellison published "Invisible Man" and Murray began to make his mark in American letters. Both men have their roots deep in the African-American communities they grew up in (Ellison in Oklahoma, Murray in Alabama), and their references and idioms are those of the world of jazz and struggle. But their correspondence is without boundaries, as they devour books and art and music, comparing impressions and sharing discoveries. One regrets that Murray moved to Ellison's adopted city, New York, in 1962, so that their marvellous dialogue moved from paper to voice, and thus was lost to posterity.



Liberace: An American Boy, *by Darden Asbury Pyron (Chicago; $27.50).* Liberace had a gift for topping himself: after 1963, each of his Vegas stage shows outdid the last in its outrageous costumes and wacky stunts, even as the shows' vaudevillian formats and musical kitsch became all the more predictable. The ultimate "performative" artist, Liberace could make publicity out of anything—except his promiscuous homosexuality, which remained a secret until the end. (He died of AIDS, in 1987.) Pyron's biography is as absurdly extravagant as its subject. After he analyzes the life and work of "the Milwaukee piano player" in the context of Proust, Jefferson, Dante, Greek myth, and a torrent of queer theory, a reader may wonder if it's all a big spoof. But the dimensions of Liberace's achievement speak otherwise: to make a successful career of celebrating conservative family values with a mixture of gender-bending, commercial glitz, and the sensual satisfactions of a Catholic Mass remains a feat too bizarre to be ignored.

Summer Vacation: Found Photographs *(T. Adler Books, Santa Barbara/D.A.P.; $30).* It would be hard to imagine a more satisfying artifact than this collection of anonymous snapshots, from the late nineteen-thirties to the early sixties, which document the unchanging iconographic repertory of the carefree American summer. People frolic in plastic kiddie pools, by the seashore, and in rowboats on placid mountain lakes; they stage birthday parties for their dogs, eat cotton candy on boardwalks, pose next to giant cacti, hold up the fish they've just reeled in. These pictures radiate a sublime innocence. As Sharon DeLano writes in the foreword, "It is probably precisely because these photographs are not *our* family photographs that we are free to love the people in them. We don't know them, never knew them. They can be whatever we want them to be. And we want them to be happy."



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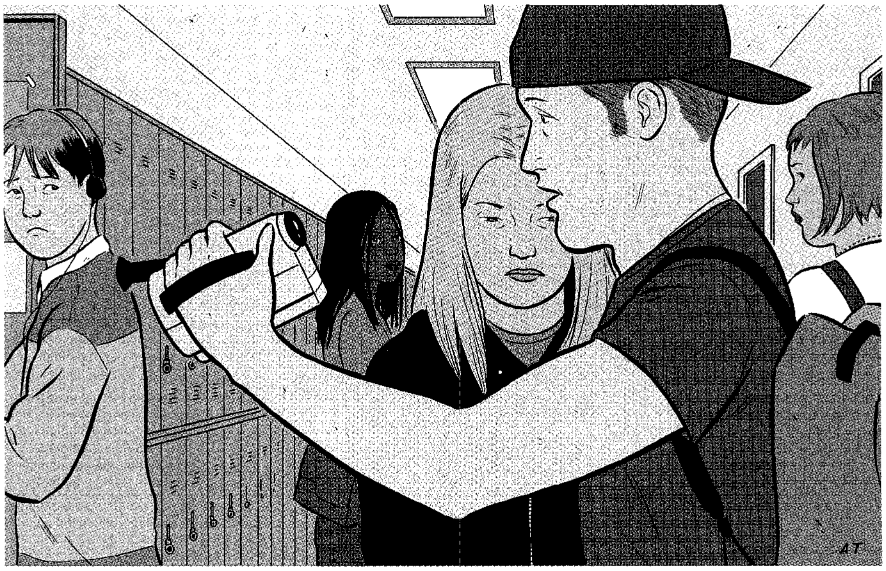
ON TELEVISION

SUFFER THE CHILDREN

America's teen-agers are ready for their closeups.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN



Fast times at Highland Park High: R. J. Cutler and his film crews record the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of fourteen camera-ready juniors and seniors.

ADRIAN TOMINE

As seen in the new Fox show "American High," teen-age life today, at school and at home, is just as much the stomach-churning waking nightmare it has always been. Still, a lot has changed since, say, Frederick Wiseman shot his 1968 documentary "High School." In that film, teachers and administrators indulged in what would now be called abuse of their authority, and rote learning was the order of the day. Individuality was something to be crushed. Well, that was then, and this is now. (Actually, this has been now for some time; the tight ship of public-education standards and practices began to leak, for better and for worse, a good thirty years ago.) For "American High," which was created, produced, and directed by R. J. Cutler—a producer of "The War Room," the documentary about Clinton's 1992 Presidential campaign—two camera crews followed fourteen juniors and seniors around a public high school in Highland Park, an upper-middle-class suburb of Chicago, for a year, and those teen-agers appear to spend every waking minute in frenzied search of their individuality; they're as determined as truffle-hunting pigs to root out their true selves and hold them up for the world to see. Authority isn't what it used to be, either; in this new world, teen-agers rule, but almost by default—the adults around them, being both more emotionally clued in than their own parents were and more confused about what is expected of them, seem ambivalent about the very notion of authority. As unsettling as this can be to both sides, it constitutes progress, and much of what we see is heartening: teachers listen, kids are openly, physically affectionate with each other and with their parents, and it's not hard to conclude that, for all their struggling, the teen-agers in "American High" have been given better tools for living than were available to previous generations.

The kids Cutler filmed are, miraculously, never boring—and that, in a way, makes them boring, because the result is so unreal. As appealing and as different from each other as they are, they may have both an irritating and a numbing effect on viewers, for they are comfortable in front of the camera to an eerily uniform degree, as if they'd been prepping all their lives for the moment when someone would come along and film them. Of course, we all now know how to present ourselves in public—even Theodore Kaczynski got the hang of it within a short time of leaving his TV-less Montana cabin—so why should the kids in "American High" be an exception? And, like most Americans, they have assimilated the self-actualizing language of Oprah and after-school specials. One kid, Robby, says, "Like, on the outside, I'm this, like, captain of lacrosse, captain of soccer, like, this jock, and that's how people see me, but on the inside I just got like a lot of love going through me." Kaytee, a cool nerd who has a Lisa Loeb look and plays guitar (you may forgive yourself if the image of Lisa Kudrow performing "Smelly Cat" on "Friends" suddenly occurs to you when you hear Kaytee singing one of her songs), says to the camera, "Am I different or am I just saying I'm different?" Jeez, I don't know. There was a time when, if you put a movie camera in front of somebody's face, you'd get something like "What should I say?" These kids, though, are the cream of the media-savvy crop (more than a hundred and twenty students auditioned for "American High"), and in their detached intensity they sound like entrepreneurs trying to package the concept of the teen-ager: one kid, looking into his bathroom mirror, says, speaking for all his people, "A pimple ruins a day in a teen-ager's life." Thanks for giving us the straight dope, Brad, but what ever happened to awkward self-consciousness and blushing inarticulateness? Pretty soon, it seems, anyone in America who doesn't greet each day with an anchorman's polish will be diagnosed with non-narcissistic personality disorder.

"American High," which will run through September 13th, has its work cut out for it: the show airs on Wednesday nights, which are currently owned by CBS, with "Survivor" and "Big Brother." Like those two, "American High" falls into the reality-TV category, but only loosely. People who say they don't have a life mean that their lives don't make sense, don't have a *story*. Cutler provides one for these kids: in shaping thousands of feet of film into twelve half-hour episodes and an hour-long graduation finale, he has taken slices of life and made them spicier, funnier, more moving, and more dramatic than the average moment in an average life. He not only captures reality but alters it, and nowhere is this more clear, in the early episodes, than in the case of Morgan, an unfocussed, energetic tornado of a teen-ager. The portrait of this kid is amazing—poignant and maddening—but it gave me some qualms about the nature of the project. At the beginning of the second episode, we witness an incredibly ugly fight between Morgan and his parents, which Morgan himself caught on videotape. First, his mother orders him to clean his room, then his father psychologically kneecaps him: "If you were a decent student, I wouldn't care if you lived in a pigsty. But you're a lousy student. . . . You have rotten manners and you have no respect. You're an absolutely obnoxious kid and everything that's good about you only surfaces with people outside this house and with the people that you want to impress." A scuffle follows, and the camera jerks around as Morgan's father tries to pry it out of his hands. A few seconds later, Morgan, now safely out of Dad's reach, says to the camera, "Like I said, my mom and dad are real pricks." Taken at face value, what Morgan's father says seems to be true up to this point (as does what Morgan says)—all we have seen of Morgan so far is the troublemaking disturber of the peace. But then we find out that he has attention-deficit disorder, and later we see him getting a job teaching gymnastics to disabled students and learning something about himself. It is a remarkable transformation, but I wonder just how much manipulation of footage it took to create this heart-tugging effect.

I also wonder whether the shocking family scene belongs on TV, but I recognize that it's too good, on some fairly obvious level, not to use: in an interview in the *Times*, Cutler said of his response when he saw what Morgan had caught on tape, "We were like, 'Oh, my God! God bless you, Morgan! You actually did it!'" Cutler is a vivid storyteller, and he does seem to have his finger on the pulse of the kids he filmed, and, God knows, the fight scene is effective. No one who sees it will forget it, least of all Morgan and his parents. But perhaps they don't mind; they may be believers in the modern idea that only by hanging your dirty laundry out in public can you get it clean. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

YIPPIE POLITICS AT PLAY

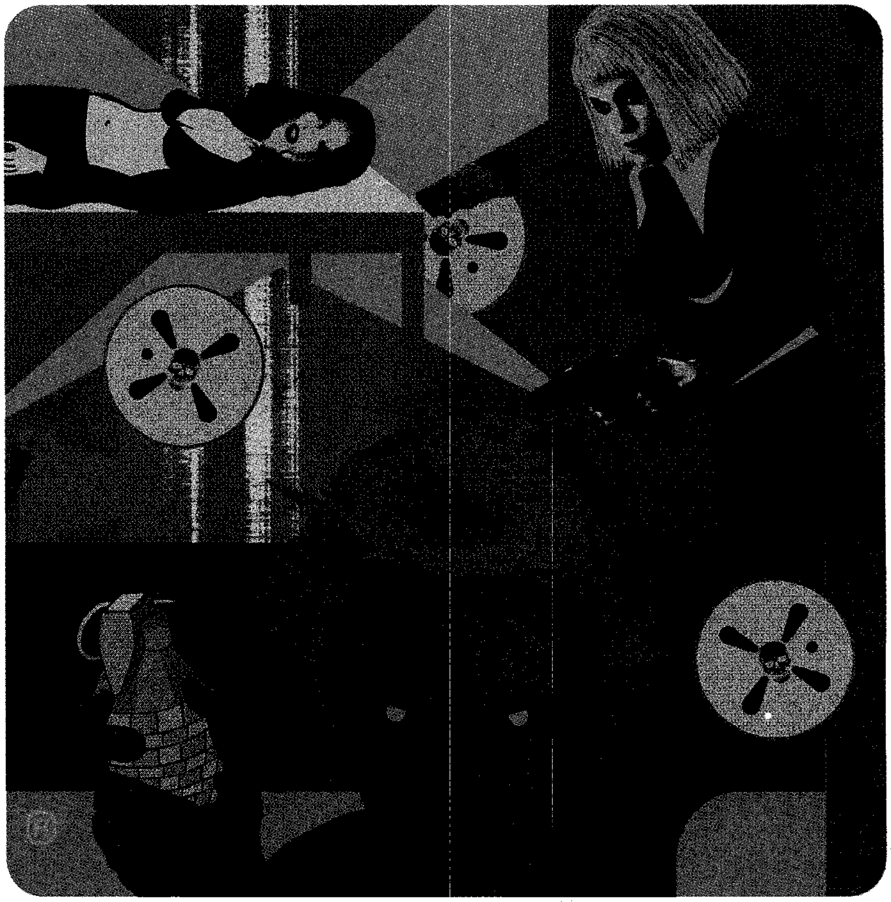
Lessons in rebellion from John Waters and Abbie Hoffman.

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new John Waters picture, "Cecil B. Demented," is about an underground film director who comes bursting to the surface. The role of Cecil goes to Stephen Dorff, whom we first see as the meek manager of a movie theatre; he is apparently preparing to welcome Honey Whitlock (Melanie Griffith), the Hollywood star and universal Überbitch, to the première of her latest tacky production, "Some Kind of Happiness." Once Honey is up onstage, Cecil rips off his wig to reveal himself as a wild Warholian blond; he kidnaps Honey, spirits her to his lair, and forces her to act in *his* latest production, "Raving Beauty," which is tackier than anything she could have imagined. Needless to say, she starts to enjoy it.

I love the premise of this picture; we all nurture fantasies of bleating celebrities being abandoned far from their dream houses and forced to fend for themselves. The trouble with John Waters films, regrettably, is that they are never quite as funny as they sound; in fact, they are never half as entertaining as the man himself. I always think of him as a human cigarette: slim, elegant, and very, very bad for you. Like a fine smoke, Waters would probably have been happiest back in the nineteen-thirties or forties; no one would have thought him remotely toxic, not with guys like von Sternberg around, and he could have hung out with Anton Walbrook and David Niven and played match-the-mustache.

"Cecil B. Demented" works hard and hectically to honor the tradition of camp; Cecil and his band of merry *cinéastes*, the Sprocket Holes—headed by Alicia Witt as Cherish, a widely loved porno queen—are a strident advertisement for bad taste. Yet the movie itself, unlike "Raving Beauty," is barely tasteless at all. The humor is oddly mild and masturbatory—sex is all promise and no delivery, and the guerrilla raids on movie sets and theatres proceed with an air of graceless slapstick. The best jokes in the picture are hit-and-run jobs; when the Sprocket Holes storm a multiplex, the movie showing within is "Patch Adams: The Director's Cut." As usual, the setting is Baltimore, which gives Waters a chance to bite the ankles of the town he so dearly loves: "If one more asshole mentions a crab cake to me, I think I'm going to puke," says Honey, a guest of the city. I have a dream that someday the pleasure-hungry Waters will film one of Anne Tyler's more timid novels, thus creating the complete Baltimore experience.



In "Cecil B. Demented," an underground film director kidnaps his celebrity star.

JOHN RITTER

If this picture had emerged ten years ago, when a trip to the art house meant E. M. Forster retreads, it might have caused more of a splash. The trouble is that since then, starting with "Reservoir Dogs" and "El Mariachi" and climaxing with the do-it-yourself delights of "The Blair Witch Project," the Cecils have entered the asylum. The Sprocket Holes may sport proud tattoos bearing the legends "Peckinpah," "Fassbinder," and "Sam Fuller," but there are plenty of young directors who would be the first to agree that those guys were gods. No one can match the madness of Peckinpah, it's true, but that's more a question of individual talent than of capitalist oppression or the stranglehold of decorum. If Cecil really wanted to spread the word of his genius—or, at any rate, the elastic charms of Cherish—he would do a Mike Figgis: hire a handful of digital cameras, rack up a hundred hours of footage for a pittance, and edit it on computer. As for kidnapping, excuse me, but that's so Patty Hearst (who, of course, appears in "Cecil B. Demented"); just get on the phone and hustle a few stars to waive their usual fees in exchange for credibility—they get to be down-home *and* avant-garde. Whether anyone would pay to see the result is another matter;

what Waters really hates, I suspect, is not the movie business but the audience, and that is a much tougher nut to crack.

The strategy of "Cecil B. Demented," according to its creator, was inspired in part by "the Yippie politics of my youth." If you want to flash back in time and watch the Yippies at work—or at play, which was the same thing—try Robert Greenwald's new film, "Steal This Movie." The movie in question is a bio-pic of Abbie Hoffman, who died in 1989, and who was responsible for the infamous "Steal This Book." One wonders vaguely whom this film is aimed at; striplings will want to know where Abbie keeps his light sabre, whereas veterans of the period will spend their time either picking holes in the details or sniffing with nostalgic fury at a lost ideal.

To be on the safe side, Greenwald structures his story like a history lesson: a panicky Hoffman (Vincent D'Onofrio), on the run from the Feds on drug charges, takes an interviewer through the main attractions of the radical era. We get Vietnam protests, the march on the Pentagon, and the trial of the Chicago Seven, when Hoffman and company were accused of conspiring to incite riot on Mayor Daley's patch. This is fair enough, but I can't help wishing that Bruce Graham's script had made an effort to skip the greatest hits. Somebody, someday, will have the courage to shoot a sixties movie in which nobody says, "The medium is the message," or "Make love, not war," but this is not that movie. A voice-over by Hoffman's wife, Anita (Janeane Garofalo), even informs us that "this was the summer of love." So, if you can't make it to the film, don't worry—you can always buy the T-shirt.

The look of "Steal This Movie" is Oliver Stone Lite: black-and-white mashed against color, authentic newsreel footage deliberately sandwiched with the cheesy fake variety. By now, the technique feels tired; it wasn't until the final minutes of Greenwald's picture, when a middle-aged Hoffman is stirring up a bunch of college students, that I felt the full blast of his passion. To do Greenwald justice, he certainly makes Hoffman larger than life; the real Abbie was a five-foot-seven bundle of nerves and know-how, while D'Onofrio is a saintly six feet three. If the movie had been shot any closer to Hoffman's heyday, you could have slipped his namesake Dustin into the role, no questions asked; instead, the Hoffman we see is a sweet, shambling giant whose plan for revolution consists largely of corrupting the country with the force of his own innocence. D'Onofrio is a terrific actor, unafraid of appearing difficult—think of his surly screenwriter in "The Player"—but Greenwald is too reverent a recorder of the left to allow him much room for anarchic maneuver.

"Steal This Movie" has a great tale to tell, yet, whatever its accuracy, it somehow doesn't taste of Abbie Hoffman, or of his will to embarrass; it feels alkaline, easy to live with, and hardly ever funny. Why hire a comedian as cool and delectable as Janeane Garofalo and then make her mope? You could argue that Greenwald is dealing with matters of political weight, with the sober shifting of national destiny; on the other hand, there was something massively unserious in both the laws and the legacy of the Yippies. Reading the transcript of the Chicago trial, I got more laughs per page from the flair and cheek of Hoffman the witness than I did from the whole of "Steal This Movie." His comebacks are a riot in themselves: "When were you born?" "Psychologically, 1960." "Between the date of your birth, November 30, 1936, and May 1, 1960, what if anything occurred in your life?" "Nothing. I believe it is called an American education." And so on. Hoffman takes his place in a line of snappy, insubordinate wit that stretches and twangs from the Marx Brothers to "Saturday Night Live," and he is all the more powerful for it; humor is a far more efficient way to sneak into the crusty consciousness of a country than linking arms in front of unsmiling troops. Change that T-shirt: Make fun, not love. ♦

The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: Feb. 21 & Feb. 28, Apr. 24 & May 1, June 19 & 26, Aug. 21 & 28, Oct. 16 & 23, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1) by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. (4 Times Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10036), which is a subsidiary of Advance Publications, Inc. Vol. LXXVI, No. 24, August 21 & 28, 2000. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $49.95. In Canada, one year, $90.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $112.00, payable in advance.

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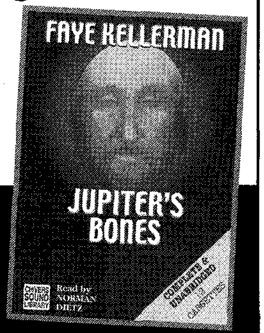

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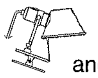

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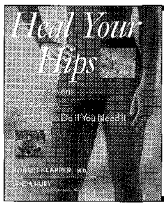

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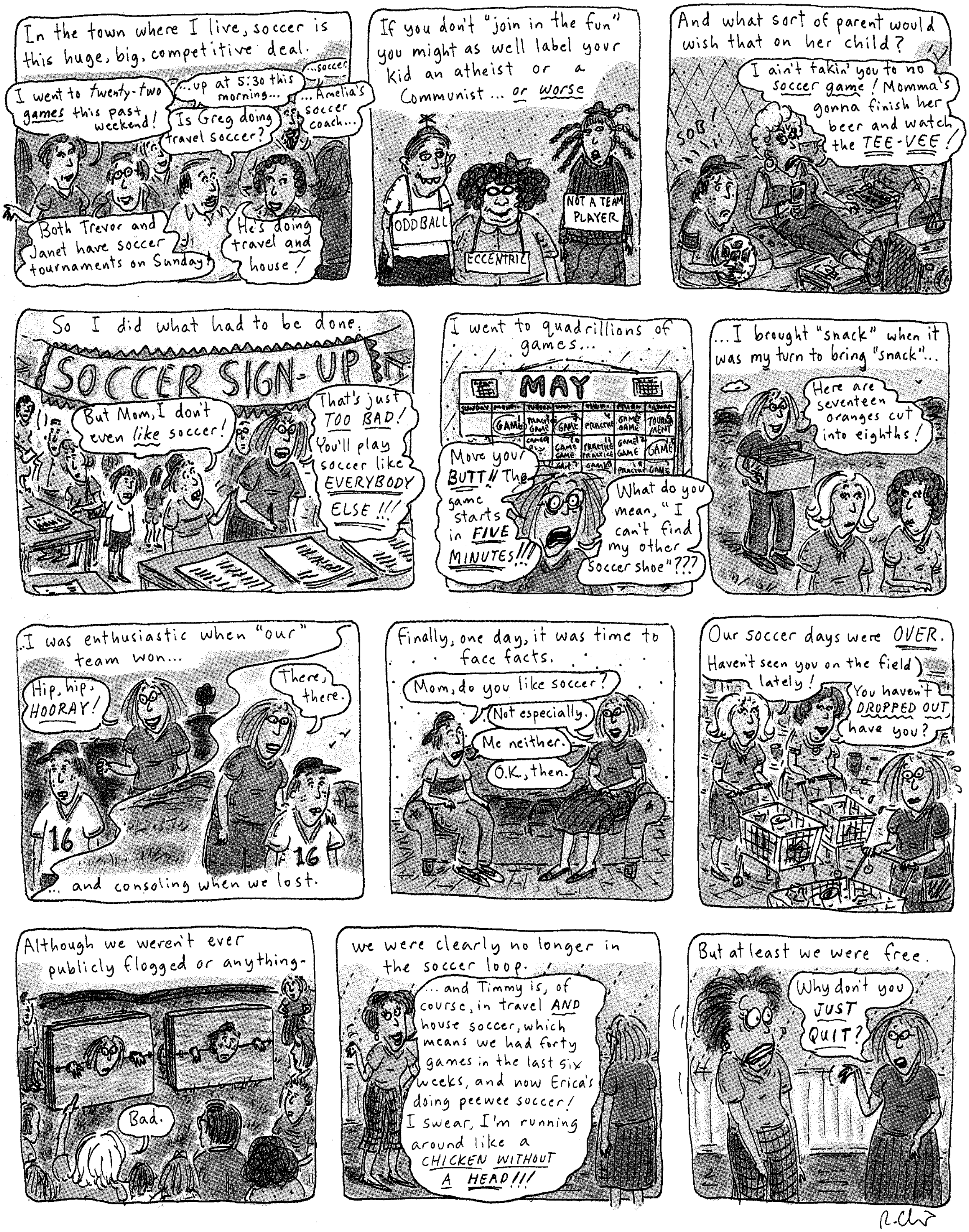
THE BACK PAGE BY ROZ CHAST

VIVE LA RÉSISTANCE


In the town where I live, soccer is this huge, big, competitive deal.
I went to twenty-two games this past weekend!
...up at 5:30 this morning...
...soccer
...Amelia's soccer coach...
Is Greg doing travel soccer?
Both Trevor and Janet have soccer tournaments on Sunday!
He's doing travel and house!
If you don't "join in the fun" you might as well label your kid an atheist or a Communist ... or worse
ODDBALL
ECCENTRIC
NOT A TEAM PLAYER
And what sort of parent would wish that on her child?
I ain't takin' you to no soccer game! Momma's gonna finish her beer and watch the TEE-VEE!
SOB!
So I did what had to be done.
SOCCER SIGN-UP
But Mom, I don't even like soccer!
That's just TOO BAD! You'll play soccer like EVERYBODY ELSE!!!
I went to quadrillions of games...
MAY
Move your BUTT!! The game starts in FIVE MINUTES!!!
What do you mean, "I can't find my other soccer shoe"???
...I brought "snack" when it was my turn to bring "snack"...
Here are seventeen oranges cut into eighths!
...I was enthusiastic when "our" team won...
Hip, hip, HOORAY!
There, there.
16
16
...and consoling when we lost.
Finally, one day, it was time to face facts.
Mom, do you like soccer?
Not especially.
Me neither.
O.K., then.
Our soccer days were OVER.
Haven't seen you on the field lately!
You haven't DROPPED OUT, have you?
Although we weren't ever publicly flogged or anything-
Bad.
we were clearly no longer in the soccer loop.
...and Timmy is, of course, in travel AND house soccer, which means we had forty games in the last six weeks, and now Erica's doing peewee soccer! I swear, I'm running around like a CHICKEN WITHOUT A HEAD!!!
But at least we were free.
Why don't you JUST QUIT?

EVEN IF YOU COME

FOR THE SUN

YOU'LL LEAVE

WITH FAR MORE.

ARUBA
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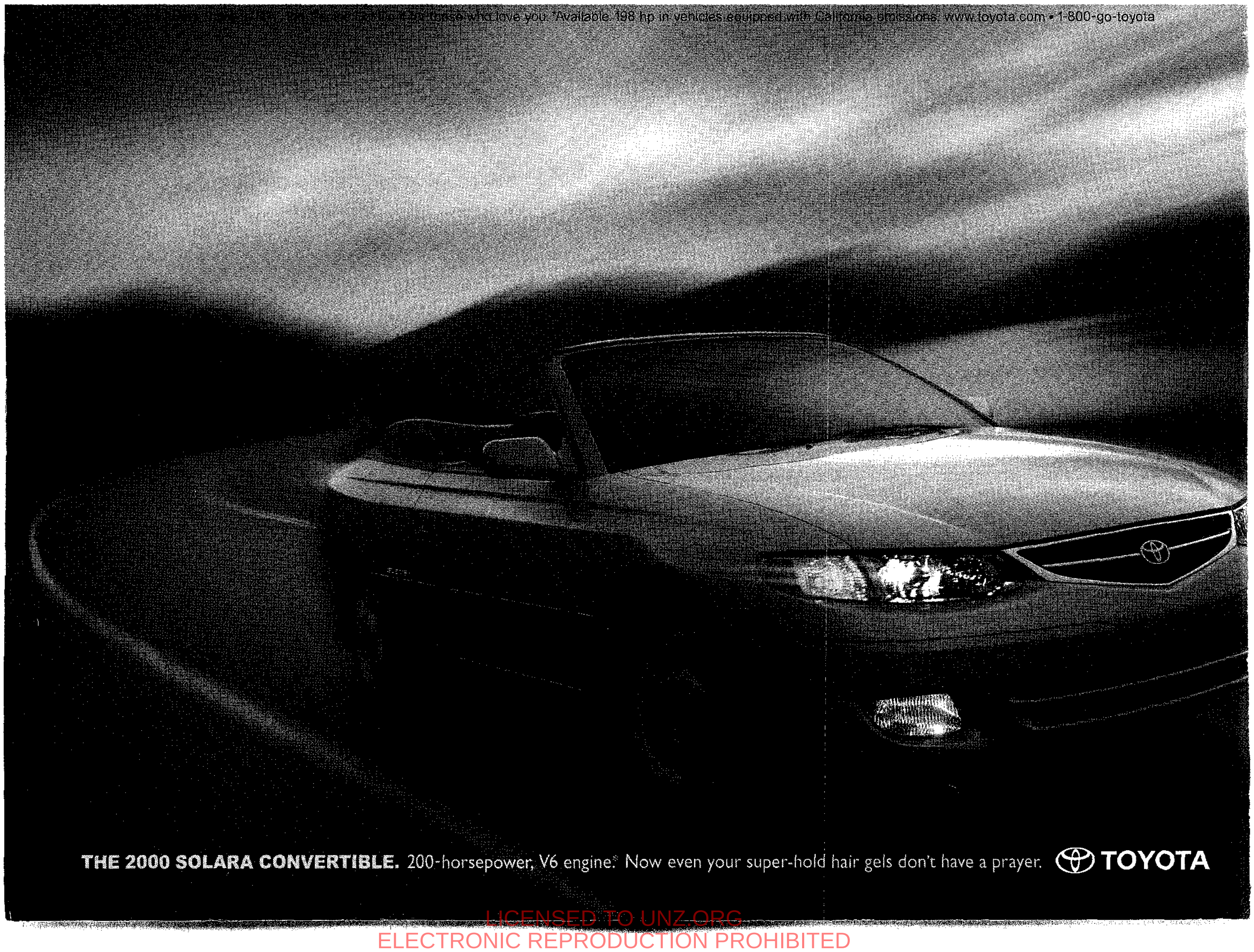
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